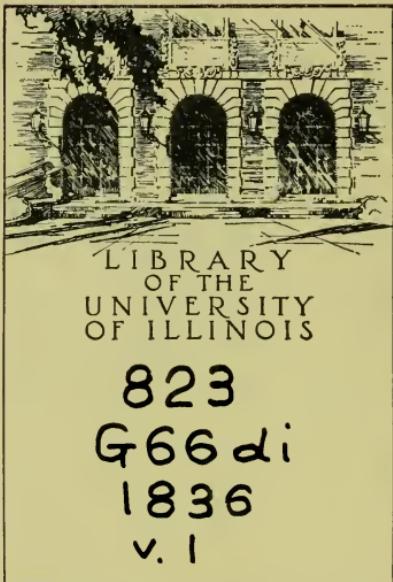


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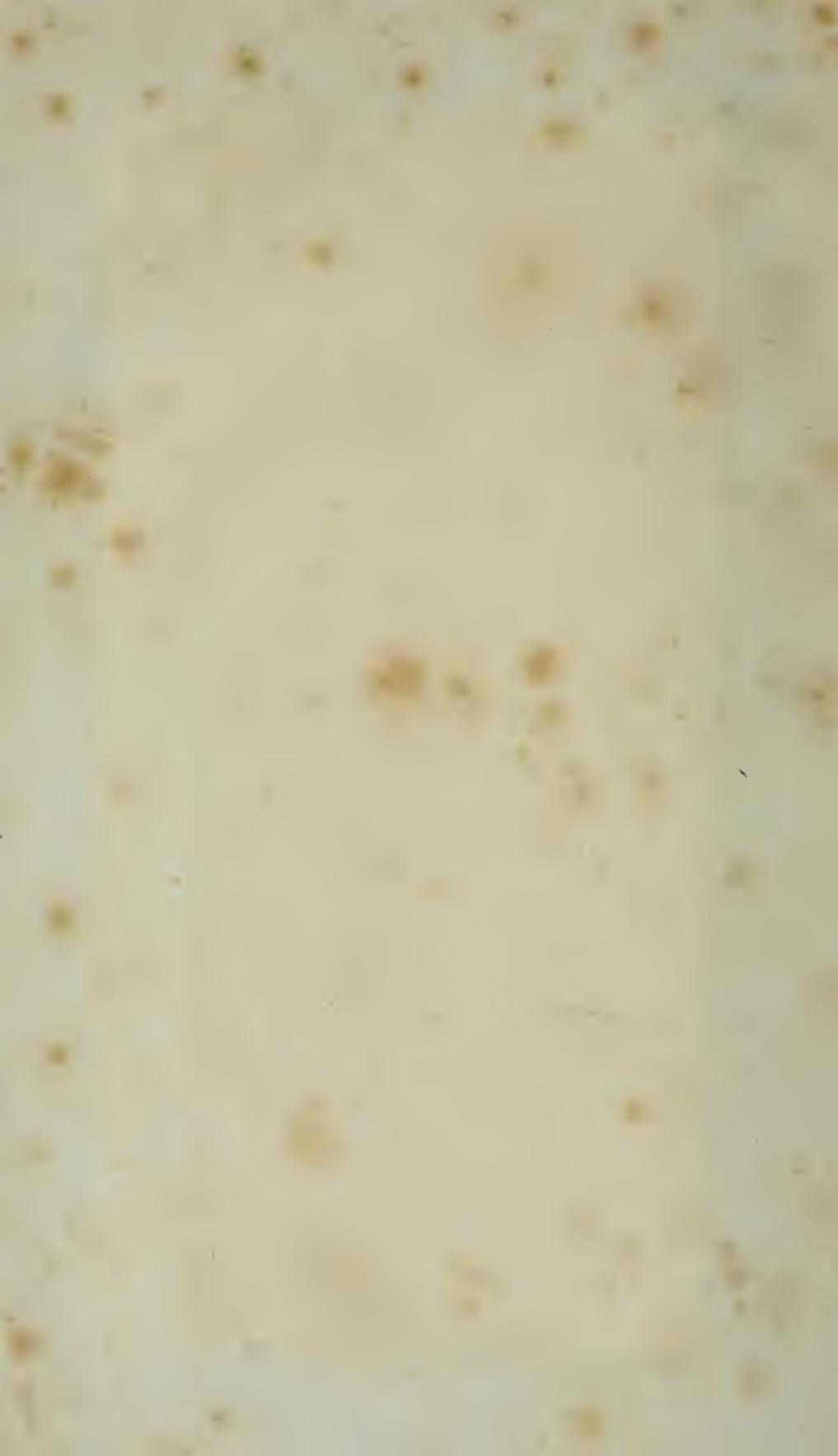
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THE DIARY
OF
A DÉSENNUYÉE.

“L’expérience du monde brise le cœur, ou le bronze.”—CHAMPFORT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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DIARY

OF

A DÉSENNUYÉE.

COVENTRY, April 6th, 183—.—To-morrow, then, I shall be in London!—Am I well-advised in commencing my little Diary with the worn-out pen and mouldy ink of an inn standish, amid the jingling of bells, and jarring of waiters? No matter!—People are apt to inveigh against the stir and tumult of an inn, and protest they can neither collect their faculties for thinking, nor tranquillize them for sleeping, amid the bustle of such places. For *my* part, I care little for the tumult that affects only my senses. Let the “party in number five” ring or wrangle as they please;—“I have no part in them or theirs.” Whether they eat their toast dry or

buttered, let me take mine ease in mine inn, congratulating myself that, thus far, my journey has been safe and pleasant.

Dear England! How beautiful it looks after my seven years' banishment! how beautiful, and how prosperous! What neatness, what completeness, after the ragged aspect of things at Ballyshumna! *Here* I am not ashamed of living in comfort, or travelling for my enjoyment. The lofty pyramid of society, whose regular gradation is so perceptible, from the wide basis to the tapering apex, seems as if in England it held together the firmer for its polished corner-stones; and it is, at all events, a relief to one's selfishness to look upon snug cottages, and a healthy, happy peasantry, instead of that degradation of human nature which met my eye at every turn in the neighbourhood of Delaval Castle. The fortune of Rothschild, and the wisdom of Solomon, would not have enabled me to alleviate a fourth part of the distress I was fated to witness; and one of the few acts of kindness I have to acknowledge towards Colonel Delaval, is his bequest

of the family estates to his excellent brother, leaving me and my jointure free liberty to search the world for as much happiness as may lie at the purchase of pounds, shillings, and pence.

Yet, how strange a destiny is mine! A widow at five-and-twenty, with six thousand a-year, and an honourable position in society,—good health, good conscience, and (between myself and my Diary) a tolerably good appearance; yet all this frustrated and embittered by my sad experience of the hollowness of the world! Married at seventeen to the man of my choice, all seemed to smile upon me when I followed Colonel Delaval to Ireland; nor could I forgive my sister Armine, for whispering, on the eve of our union, that an acquaintance of six weeks scarcely justified me in placing my happiness within his keeping. What prescience, alas! rendered *her* so wise? How came she to guess that Delaval, in withdrawing from the army on his marriage, and devoting himself to the pleasures of Irish squirehood, would become—but let the past be forgotten.

Thanks to my experience, I re-enter the world with a heart steeled to insensibility, and a resolution to be indebted to my head alone for future pleasures. Instead of quarrelling with society (the common error of misanthropes, who, like myself, desire only a life of tranquillity), I shall, in my worst of humours, doff the world aside, and bid it pass ; in my best, smile in its face, and thank it for its smiles ;— then retire like an oyster into my shell, as easily forgetting as forgotten !

It is true, Armine and I entertain for each other a more than common sisterly affection. The early loss of our parents, the secluded life we led in Staffordshire, under the care of our good aunt Margaret, now gathered to the vault of all the Montresors, rendered us in youth mutually dependent on each other's friendship. But the experiences of our married life seem to have created estrangements ; and we are no longer fitted to understand each other as formerly. I once saw in a pavilion, near the Lake of Windermere, four contiguous windows of variously stained glass, imparting

to the same landscape the aspect of the four seasons. Just so it is with us. Armine looks at life through the summer window, — I, through the winter! Our prospects are alike, — “alike—but, oh! how different!”

It is, therefore, with my little Diary that I must philosophize; — it is my little Diary I must take into my confidence. Having lived so long alone, or worse than alone, I have acquired a habit of gossiping and arguing with myself; and surely our opinions are never so fairly submitted to our judgment, as when arrayed in black and white before us.— Here, therefore, begins my first chapter of a new existence. A sad one, or a merry? Oh! for a sybil to unfold! On one thing I am determined: I bid defiance to the mere *ennuis* of life. Never again will I submit to be *bored*!

My cousin, Lady Cecilia Delaval, writes me word, that the house she has engaged for me, in St. James's Place, is “a perfect *bijou* ;” a cant phrase of hers. She wrote me the same thing some years ago, of Azor, her pet lap-dog; and when she brought the little brute to

Delaval Castle, the *bijou* turned out to be an asthmatic pug ! Better, however, trust to *her* experience, than venture alone into the wide world of London, which I know so little, yet dislike so much. How detestable were those biennial visits to town with my aunt Margaret Montresor, who, every year or two, used to migrate from Staffordshire to a ready-furnished house, where the windows would not open, nor the doors close, to persecute her solicitors with a new plea for her old Chancery suit, and Armine and myself with visits to the dentist, stay-maker, shoemaker, the wax-work, and the Eidouranion,—Hatchard's and Rivington's,—to torment our souls and bodies into the way they should go ! Ten years, however, have since elapsed ; my days of dentists and back-boards are over ; and, though I may revisit Hatchard's shop, it will not be to procure a series of Pinnoch's Catechisms, cased in strong calf, for the *use and abuse* of the school-room.

St. James's Place, April 9th.—Not a fault to be found with my new residence ! A house

neither too large nor too small, overlooking the park ; fitted up only last spring, by one of the fashionable *virtù*-mongers, for a newly-married couple, who spent five years' income during their first season in town, and are now doing penance for their folly in some barrack of a palace on the Arno. Poor little bride ! it must have cost her many a pang to quit the shrine where she had been worshipped. There are a thousand traces of womanliness in the house, such as were never impressed by the hand of an upholsterer ; particularly in my own room and boudoir, the walls of which are hung with light chintz and muslin draperies, with windows opening through a conservatory to the park.

Lady Cecilia was waiting for me on my arrival, as lively and as agreeable as ever. She is enchanted that Armine and her husband will not be in town for some months ; and declares that the Herberts are just the sort of humdrum people to spoil me,— to “set me in a wrong pattern.”

After all, her notions are rather arbitrary.

I used to fancy Lady Cecilia the most independent and easy person in the world ; but her ease turns out to be a laborious affair,—a perpetual warfare with the ceremonial of life. There is such a thing, I suspect, as being the slave of one's liberty.

I believe, however, I cannot put myself under safer tutelage than her's. No one is so much the fashion. She commands the interest and influence of her sister, the Marchioness of Clackmannan (a lady of the bedchamber, and patroness of Almack's, and all that sort of thing), without the bore and trouble of placeholding ; while her stupid husband, Sir Jenison Delaval, *s'empresse de dire amen à toutes ses messes*, fancying her, or at least proclaiming her, the best of wives, because she is wise enough to let him pass his life at his club, well-bred enough to be civil to him in public, and judicious enough never to see him in private. Lady C. is, in short, a woman of what is called the world. She has prodigious tact ; always some little scheme or other on foot, and which invariably succeeds. But, after all, the

objects she accomplishes are comparatively trifling; and, to spend one's life in such manœuvres, seems like devoting a forty-horse-power engine to cutting chaff.

Nothing, for instance, can exceed her delight at having outwitted Lady Wexford, a tortoise of a dowager (whom I used to know in Dublin), in the choice of a certain opera-box, which we are to share together. It strikes me that any other would have suited us as well. But Lady Cecilia tells me General Vernon has had a ticket of that identical box for the last thirty years, and will not be at the trouble of changing it; so that she is sure of getting rid of her spare ticket. It is plain that she does not choose to have a place at the disposal of Sir Jenison. The box holds only four; and she advises me to retain both mine. I amused her not a little by inquiring whether General Vernon was a pleasant man, as she seemed so glad to secure him; and she amused me no less by replying, that he was a bore *par excellence*, but too well taught to dream of setting foot in the box to which he belongs.

10th.—Just returned from a long drive with Lady Cecilia. What multitudes of people! Yet they say there will be no one in town till after Easter; and nothing going on till the end of May. The “nothing,” so called, consists, however, in nightly parties, twice as numerous and brilliant as any I have been in the habit of enjoying; and last night I accompanied Lady Cecilia to a card-party, comprehending, she assured me, the *élite of the élite*. One of the Sicilian mummy-vaults, described by travellers, must certainly present just such a conclave of lean, yellow, shrivelled, inexpressive faces. In the course of the evening, a few male individuals, half a century younger than the enshrined divinities of the temple, made their appearance; but of these the small-talk was so very small, and the big looks so very big, that I took refuge in my own observations.

“ You will like them better when their jargon ceases to be an unknown tongue,” said Lady Cecilia, after presenting me to our hostess, a good kind of roundabout woman, turbaned

after the most approved fashion of countess-dowagerhood. “ This is a house of which it is indispensable to have the *entrée*,—open first and last in the season, when nothing better is to be had. Besides, the *habitués* of the set have a way of discussing those who do not belong to them, which makes it prudent to join their forces.”

“ What unsafe people for friends !”

“ You surely mean, ‘ what unsafe people for enemies ? ’ Yonder crooked little woman, for instance, with the bright eyes and tiny feet, is, to strangers, as malicious as a monkey ; and quite as faithful and amusing, to any one who will be at the trouble of making a pet of her.”

“ Be more gracious, my dear Lady Cecilia,” said I. “ Compare her, at least, to a sprig of sweet-briar—fragrant and charming to those who handle it with dexterity.”

“ She, too, is the centre of a *petit comité*, to which you will find it worth while to belong, unless you choose to venture on being toma-hawked, by declaring war against the tribe. In *this* house your passport to favour is an

easy one. Lose a few guineas now and then at whist, and you will be free of the set. In *that* something more is wanting ; you must manage to make them laugh, either *at* or *with* you ; be very absurd, or very entertaining. It is a set, in short, where excitement is the order of the day,—full of lions, and other monsters, after their kind. But the *succès* of a mere lion is the shortest of all possible successes. His popularity wears out before he has time to establish himself."

" And in what style do you intend *me faire évènement* among these people ?" said I, anxious to discover the designs upon me.

" I have scarcely decided ! Pretty, well-dressed, lively, rich, disengaged, with nothing to provoke that fretful porcupine, the world, to set its quills at you ; I think I shall produce you as an agreeability."

" Pray, don't ! I have not a set smile at my disposal ; and cannot give myself the trouble of looking and talking delightfully with all my might for the gratification of strangers."

" My dear, you *must* give yourself a few

months' trouble, if you intend to be popular. Once established as an agreeability, your reputation will carry you on, season after season. But during this, your first spring in town, you must stand, cap in hand, in the market-place, to secure the most sweet voices of the people worth knowing."

"But if I choose to be an independent member, and disdain the courtship of votes?"

"Absurd! No one living in society can be independent. The world is like a watch-dog, which fawns upon you, or tears you to pieces. If you choose to remain in whole skin, take my advice—throw the beast a sop or two out of your abundance, and make it wag its tail in your honour for the remainder of your days."

What a system! What a stifling of honourable sentiment! What a sacrifice of principle! Heaven preserve me from becoming a convert to Lady Cecilia's code of minor morals! I can understand lighting a candle to the devil; for "the prince of darkness is a gentleman." But, to burn farthing rushlights

to all the little dirty imps of Pandemonium—to use a favourite proverb of the vulgar, *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*.

12th.—I complained to-day to Lady Cecilia, that her dressmaker had sent me home a frightful gown.

“ She was quite right,” replied my friend. “ Madame Biais saw that you would be a bad customer, and did not put herself out of the way to please you.”

“ A bad customer?”

“ You took the liberty of asking for her bill.”

“ Which you call being a bad customer?”

“ In our class and hers a ready-money customer implies a person who changes or dismisses his tradesmen as the fancy takes him. No fashionable tradesman cares to be employed by those who have a right to examine his goods, and find fault with his prices. These people prefer clients many pages deep in their books, who dare not grumble at being overcharged. Madame Biais, for instance, knows not what

to make of a lady who gives her the trouble of writing out an account in the midst of the hurry and bustle of the season. By the way, my dear, do you like Mr. Penrhyn?"

"The man who sat so long with us last night at the opera?"

"So long, indeed, that I began to apprehend mischief from the double barrels of Mrs. Percy's *lorgnette*, steadily levelled at you during his visit. Mrs. Percy (let me anticipate the inquiry you are about to make) is a sort of lay impropriator of poor Penrhyn; a very pretty woman, with no further harm in her than an appetite for being talked about with the most fashionable man of the season, be he who he may. Just now, she will not allow Penrhyn to call his soul his own;—writes him sentimental billets, keeps him listening to her guitar, or flageolet, or Jew's-harp, or accordion, or some such trash, merely that his cabriolet may be seen waiting at her door; or stops him at Piccadilly Gate, to be smiled at, and whispered to, through her carriage window, under the observation of fifteen

hundred people passing by, and the Achilles standing still. Mrs. Percy would be miserable, unless she knew herself to be the object of scandal.”

“ And Mr. Penrhyn?”

“ The lady’s pretence of a *penchant* at first amused him, and he bore being whispered to, smiled at, and billet-douxed, with remarkable fortitude. But, the novelty of her enthusiasm over, he grew sick of his Barmecide’s feast; and now, I never beheld so bored a man! Yet he seems afraid of declaring off; for there is no sort of *esclandre* she is not capable of provoking, in order to *appear* the heroine of a romance.”

“ Why does he not manage to get out of fashion?”

“ The fates have been against him! Lord Wanderford, arriving, as swarthy as a Moor, from his travels in Abyssinia, threatened, a few weeks ago, to dethrone him. But, unluckily, Penrhyn’s grandfather, old Lord Penrhyn, is likely to die; when he will become one of the wealthiest individuals in Europe.

His *éclat* thus enhanced, poor Mrs. Percy will make herself more ridiculous than ever. By the way, my dear, I recommend you to marry Penrhyn, and put them both out of their pain."

"Pray, find them some other cure," said I. "The thing I like least is a dowager dandy—a superannuated London man—an out-pensioner of White's—without an idea or an ambition beyond St. James's Street. Your Mr. Penrhyn *connaît bien son Londres*, but he knows nothing else; I never saw such a cut-and-dried specimen of his caste."

"There is more in him, however," said Lady Cecilia, rising to take leave, "than you seem to have had wit to discover. The man has a gift of solemn irony, which victimizes even the most wary. But for the diversion he has found in making game of the Percy by his *persiflage*, he never would have had patience with her vagaries."

"I certainly had not the wit to discover all this," said I, interrupting Lady Cis; "or it would have determined me to close my doors against Mr. Penrhyn."

18th.—My visiting list already extends to many pages; including the various connexions, near and remote, of the families of Montresor and Delaval. Lady Cecilia, too, has presented me to her own set of acquaintance; many of them, I fear, “pleasant, but wrong.” I do not, at least, feel *safe* in their society; nor can I help listening to ascertain whether the ice on which we are sliding together be not giving way under our feet. Would that Armine and my brother-in-law were arrived!

A pleasant dinner yesterday at Sir Richard and Lady Dunbar’s: a well-appointed establishment—handsome plate, excellent cook. But one feels invited there to render them justice. Lady Dunbar piques herself on her proficiency in the *étiquettes* of life, and loves to impress you with due admiration of her *savoir vivre*; but not a creature was ever welcomed to the house from the genuine impulse of hospitality. Their dinners have established them in society—obtained *him* the *entrée* of the best clubs—and, in some shower of coronets produced by the stormy state of the political

atmosphere, will, perhaps, buy him into the peerage. “Prejudice apart,” whispered Mr. Penrhyn to me yesterday, at dinner, “this *potage à la financière* deserves the Upper House.”

The first time I accompanied Lady Cecilia Delaval to old Lady Kent’s card-party, I was much amused by the uneasy manner in which she was addressed by a certain Lady Mardynville,—evidently in an agony lest Lady Cis should present the “new woman” to her.

“Have mercy on Sir Robert and Lady Mardynville, and do not look hard at them till they have ascertained that you are worthy of their acquaintance,” whispered my friend, with assumed gravity.

“And what are *they*, of *mine*?” I asked, as the baronet and his wife scuttled fussily out of the way of an introduction.

“Heaven forbid that such pains-taking people should be lightly spoken of,” she replied. “Two more persevering distinction-hunters never climbed the ladder of society. From the day of their sympathetic union, they

have neither eaten, drunk, nor slept, with any other object before their eyes than their own aggrandizement in those of the world. Not a levee, not a drawing-room, that they do not attend ; not a royal porter's book in which the names of Sir Robert and Lady Mardynville are not inscribed with ' damnable iteration ;' not a ministerial lacquey, to whom their liveries are not familiar as *Punch's* puppet-show. They have deserted their family place, to hire a residence within view of the flag-staff of Windsor Castle ; and were heard to congratulate each other one winter, when their children caught the measles at Brighton at the same moment with Prince George. Sir Robert used to answer every body's inquiries with assurances that little Bobby was better, and Prince George quite out of danger."

Such was Cecilia's definition of the amiable couple who so manifestly despised me ; and last night, at the Dunbar's, they fully justified her diatribe. When they entered the room, the Duke of Merioneth happened to sit next me on the sofa, conversing in that familiar

whisper by which he thinks proper to mark to the world that he knows only those whom he knows intimately. The whisperee of a duke became, of course, a fine thing in the eyes of such people as the Mardynvilles. In the course of ten minutes, up came Lady Dunbar, all smiles,—Lady Mardynville, all courtesies,—determined to make my acquaintance.

“ Long desirous of the honour—moving in the same circle—meeting, night after night, without the privilege of speaking; so excessively awkward,” &c. &c.

The duke rose, and stalked away to make room for my new friends; while Mr. Penrhyn shocked Sir Robert to death, by pretending to mistake his household button for that of the R. Y. C.!

This morning arrived cards, and (without waiting to have them returned) an invitation for a dinner-party, three weeks hence.—*Shan't go!* What, but politics, can have been typified in the golden pippin of Ate? and what ages of discord has not the fatal fruit engen-

dered? Yet, surely, the factions of Guelf and Ghibelline, or White and Red Rose, never carried their barbarian animosities to so unchristian a pitch, as the polite hatred of modern Whig and Tory? Since the triumph of the Catholic Question, political spleen has become a species of endemic at the west end; a cholera morbus never to be extirpated. It is considered a mark of *caste* among the fine ladies to "doat on the Duke of Wellington," or to "adore the present ministry;" the intellectual coteries affecting the latter creed, — the exclusives, the former. The ventilator, it seems, set their brains a-madding for a season or so; and, just as they all went hero-mad during the peninsular war, they became statesman-mad when the star of Canning, Brougham, or Stanley, raged as the dog-star of the hour.

And then they so dearly love a little bit of finesse, to sneak their pitiful way to a vote, either at Brookes's or in the house. Madame L——n was the first to bring this sort of *tripotage* into fashion. So well-bred, so well-

dressed, nothing *she* did appeared amiss ; like Cleopatra,

“ Vilest things

Became themselves in her, and holy bishops
Blessed her when”

she advocated the cause of holy alliance. From *her* more than one flighty dame derives a precedent for a system of intrigue, such as the Duchesse de Longueville might rise from her grave to applaud.

After all, the most able of female politicians makes herself as disagreeable as ridiculous. Women carry their sensibilities with them even into the ventilator, and exercise their feelings when they fancy they are exercising their judgment. They see through the eyes of their heart, and hear with its ears ; and sometimes, unluckily, talk out of its abundance. Yesterday, at dinner at the Delavals', a gradually rising murmur reached us from the end of the table furthest from the place where I was quietly eating my soup, which, at length, deepened into a decided storm. Mrs. Percy, and the old Duchess of Plymouth, were

speaking, what they call their minds, the plainest English ever uttered by lips polite ; each reviling the particular friends or particular party of the other. Lady Cecilia, who hates to have the pleasantness of her parties broken in upon, kept trying to pour oil upon the waves ; but her oil was mere *huile de roses*, of too light a quality to subdue billows so uproarious ; and Penrhyn, a dear lover of mischief, kept spurring the belligerents on to battle by little minikin-pin pricks of impertinence.

Now, of what use was all their squabbling, either to their party (their party !) or themselves ? Not a word uttered by either, for arguments they did not attempt to utter, would have weighed against an eider-duck's feather ! On one side it was always “ It is well known that, if the duke thought proper, he might”—so and so ; on the other, “ Nothing but the paltry intrigues, and the under-hand cabals of the Tories have prevented”—so and so. What a draw-back upon rational conversation and social feeling ! Better talk to all eternity of

the weather, as we used to do in Ireland ; or of *chiffons*, as I am told they do in Paris. Lady Cecilia declares that three or four of the best houses in town have become insupportable during the last few years, on account of the state of parties ; among others, that of her charming sister, the marchioness ; where,

“ Under which Club, Bezonian ? Speak, or die !”

is the first inquiry made of every new pretender to her acquaintance.

George Hanton, who sat next me yesterday, during this battle of frogs and mice, could not conceal his indignation that the process of so good a dinner (when he happened to be in good appetite) should be disturbed by such impertinent bickering !

“ What bores those women are !” he whispered to me, with a face of the deepest concern — “ I protest I hardly know what I have got on my plate !” and, with Hanton, *such* ignorance is any-thing but bliss. I remember him, ten years ago, coming to pass the holidays at Lord Randall’s, in Staffordshire, when Armine

and I were young and disengaged ; and then, as now, having eyes only for an *entrée*. His time and fortune are spent in ministering to his palate ; and a first-rate education seems to have instructed him in nothing but the gormandizings of mankind. He recognizes the Spartans only by their black broth, and the Romans by the gluttonies of Apicius or Lu-cullus. Talk to him of the state of the arts during the middle ages, and he will answer that, in those times, forest venison was a most delicious thing ; and, in the way of chronology, instead of dating from “ before the invention of gunpowder,” or “ the discovery of printing,” George is apt to time his epochs by “ before tea was brought into Europe,” or “ before potatoes were in general use.” His acquaintance, nay his friends, are chosen *selon* the merits of their cook, or their power of appreciating the cooks of others. He was heard to exclaim of one of the greatest ministers of modern times, “ I have a bad opinion of Lord — . I once saw what pretended to be a *suprême de volaille* at his table, which was literally made of veal.”

“ And what then — do you suppose he ordered such a substitute ? ”

“ No ! — but what an opinion must his cook have had of his understanding, to venture on such a subterfuge ; and, after all, who knows one better than one’s cook ? ” — Hanton has dropped the acquaintance of the Mardynvilles, because their turbot is high instead of their venison, and refused to be presented to pretty little Lady Ryland, on account of the badness of her dinners. “ It is time lost,” said he, “ to know such people.” He invariably places himself next me at dinner ; and I have discovered that my ignorance of gastronomic science constitutes my attraction. I have not taste enough to secure the truffles, or the *beaux morceaux* of the made-dishes brought round ; and Mr. Hanton, as my next neighbour, profits by the oversight. I fear he will judge me unworthy of an invitation to one of his dinners, which I hear highly extolled by those, *bien entendu*, who hold

That to live well means nothing but to eat.

May 1.—What a beautiful city is London at this season of the year, when the spring breezes, dispersing both fog and smoke, afford glimpses of blue sky! What order in the streets;—what courtesy, what splendour in the shops!—Regent Street, for instance, with its macadamized road covered with carriages, and wide pavements thronged with passengers, is a very type of the times;—all show and speculation,—all activity and superficiality. Then the west end squares, and the streets leading into Park Lane,—how dignifiedly dull;—“nothing to be seen there,” as some would-be Brummel observed, “but the aristocracy, *savoir*, a population of lords and footmen.” Each isolated mansion of that favoured region contains, within its little world, all that ingenuity and industry tender in exchange for wealth; the best productions of art, the newest combinations of science, the most graceful inventions of fancy; to render life more easy and exquisite for those who know not a discomfiture beyond the rumpling of the rose leaf!

Then, the two new quarters that arose

under the reign of that king of the surfaces, George IV!—the Regent's Park,—the Athens of the Bloomsburians; and Belgrave and Eaton Squares,—the Place Vendôme, and Place de Louis XV., of our new lords and old bankers.—*There* live the opulent and the ascendant,—the Dunbars and the Mardynvilles. *There* dines Hanton,—there flirts Mrs. Percy;—while my friend Lady Cecilia, more aristocratic in her predilections, clings to the sobrieties of Grosvenor Square; whose ancient hall-chairs are polished, not by French varnish, but by much friction of generations of lacqueys, from the time when the link of Lady Mary Wortley's chairman was thrust into the extinguisher, still suspended over the entrance!

Then we have Carlton Gardens,—the Hesperides of Cabinet Ministers,—which shifts its occupants with every change of administration. Were the ghosts of Fox and Sheridan to arise from the Abbey in the mists of some November morning, how would they marvel to behold the classic ground of Carlton House devoted to the hubbub of conservative clubs, or the gorgeous

vulgarity of such satraps as Sir Bangalore Hooghly and Co. !

Till within these fifteen years, however, the domestic architecture of London hobbled far behind the march of luxury. A handsome town residence was then a show-house ;—bath-rooms, a gallery, and a little marble, and plate-glass, constituted a palace ; and, lo ! there are *now* squares—full of mansions fit for princes to be ruined in ! Not an agent's book but contains a dozen attainable by the week or season, where you may live as Thelusson, or the Duchess of Gordon, sovereignized some forty years ago.

The immediate consequence of this diffusion of brick and mortar seems to be the evacuation of the city. Instead of the wealthy merchants, and great bankers, once resident in the vast, square, roomy mansions of its dark and narrow lanes, I learn that not a merchant of eminence sleeps within sound of Bow Bell ; and hence the difficulty of appropriately filling up those civic offices, formerly so eminent in their illustration. The commodious dwellings of the great capital-

ists have been converted into warehouses, or are inhabited by clerks ; and the thinly populated city is twice as wholesome, and half as dignified. The Regent's Park, meanwhile, extends its stuccoed terraces ; — and London seems to stretch its gigantic arms, and gape for air, — like some mighty monster, awaking from a trance.

It might afford me a useful lesson, that so many of my new visitors were, by the way, friends of my imprudent predecessors here, and fed on their undoing.

“ Aha ! ” drawled little Mrs. Percy, on her first visit, — “ I see you have got the Thistle-down's love of a house, — the prettiest little toyshop in London.

“ Foolish people ! — They *would* do things to which they had no pretension ; — swam out of their depth, and sank for ever.”

“ Or rather, like the Flying Fish in the fable,” observed Penrhyn (who “ happens” to drop in wherever her carriage is seen stopping), “ they got out of their element, and were pecked to death by the birds, into whose nest they had intruded. People thought them silly

and presuming, even when their silliness and presumption were upheld by a charming house, excellent establishment, and select dinner-parties ; but when we found, that even *these* were assumption, no words can describe our indignation at their impertinence !

“ Mrs. Thistledown had passed for a pretty woman, we now thought her a fright, and called her ‘ *that* Mrs. Thistledown.’ He had been regarded as a frank well-natured man ; we now decided him to be a tiger ! What became of either we neither knew nor inquired. It was sufficiently horrible that we had been dining and supping with people not fairly entitled to give us dinners or suppers.”

“ Indeed, I did inquire,” said Mrs. Percy, incapable of discerning between her friend’s serious and ironical vein, “ and I was told they were in prison. Of course, there was an end of the thing.”

“ And there might as well have been an end of the people,” said Penrhyn, laughing. “ They are morally dead — defunct, to all intents and purposes. Let them sleep in peace.”

“Particularly as we find dear Mrs. Delaval so satisfactorily established in their place,” was Mrs. Percy’s well-turned rejoinder.

But Mrs. Percy’s heartlessness is by no means unique. Most of my new friends (and many among them should know better) have entered with a similar ejaculation.

“Ah! by the way, this is poor Thistledown’s house. Didn’t he die, or something of that sort? Ruined?—Ah! very true!—I recollect now. He played—both hazard and the fool—and was done up before one had made up one’s mind whether he was a man to be known. Howard was rash enough to put him up at White’s; which was amazingly wrong of Howard, who has himself only one leg to stand upon.”

“Now, do just look at those Dresden vases, and those Marqueterie consoles; and think of the absurdity of a fellow like Thistledown venturing on such fancies! A man with barely income enough for mahogany and Wedgwood-ware, to presume to have a taste!”

“Well!—he has met with his *deserts*;

and his *dinners* we all met with!" added a Jekyling.

"Just imagine that I sent cards here to the Thistledowns this season, quite forgetting they were done up!" drawled Lady Grace Gosling. "Had it not been for my good fortune in knowing Mrs. Delaval, and recognizing this little humming-bird's nest of theirs, I should never have thought of them again."

Such is the worldliness of the world! Thus easily are broken those brittle ties of spun-glass, which one forms in the chance-medley of a season. People are true to their relations, and faithful to their friends; but how few make it a matter of principle to be true to their acquaintances! Formed by an exchange of courtesies and cards, on some accidental temptation (such as Lady A.'s desire to flirt with Lord B. at Lady C.'s ball, and Lady C.'s desire to have her ball adorned by the presence of Lady A.'s diamond necklace), London acquaintanceships barely survive their ephemeral day, unless revived by some further motive of expediency.

There seems to be a distinct profession sprung up of late years, which, for want of a better designation, I shall call acquaintance-brokerage. Certain dowagers of note undertake to patronise balls for acquaintanceless people; and go about, promising and vowing, in their name, that the music and supper shall be excellent. Many of these acquaintance-brokers perform their functions in all honesty; and simply give an agreeable *fête* to their own visiting list, at the house of a Colonel Crab or a Mrs. Brown, with a proviso that visiting cards shall be left for the Crab or the Brown on the following day. Others exercise their functions with Judas-like treachery. “ My dear Lady Laura, you *must* come on Thursday night to some new people in Hereford Street, whom I have promised to patronise;” or, “ My dear duke, I have undertaken this ball in Hereford Street for the—What’s their names? I am bored to death with the whole affair, and will positively never trouble myself with such a *corvée* again. But you will greatly oblige me by looking in for a minute or two.” Some-

times they are still less deferential towards their *protégés*; and the more exclusive dandies are persuaded to go and sup at No. 104, Harley Street, without a word of the name or nature of its proprietor. “ I always bow to the diamond necklace nearest the door on entering, when I am invited in this way,” said Sir Harry Andover to me, in describing the brokerage system,—“ and take it for granted that I have made myself free of the house.”

“ A year or two ago,” said Penrhyn, who sometimes plays the moralist, among his other parts of exquisite dissembling, “ there came up from Wales some rich mine-people, who had a mind to push forward into society. A ball seemed their readiest mounting-stone, and a ball they determined to give, under the sponsorship of some Lady Ap Shenkin or other, the wife of a Welsh baronet neighbour. The company assembled by the lady of the leek, was of the kind called “ highly respectable;”— brother baronets and sister baronetesses, — Portland Place directors and directresses, — admirals, generals, lord and lady chief justices, *et hoc*

genus omne ; most of them party-givers, as well as party-goers ; and the new people were invited to some two hundred humdrum entertainments in exchange for their one. So far, so fair ! But, among the admirals' wives, alas ! was a Lady Lavinia Tarpaulin, who had sprit-sailed her way through a fashionable winter at Brighton ; and, in the course of the evening, contrived to make it known to the acquaintance seekers, that *she* would have made their baronets, lords ; and their ladies, ladies in waiting. Next year, accordingly, Lady Lavinia undertook their ball, and Lady Ap Shenkin was compelled to own to the hundred applicants for her interest to obtain a ticket, that *she* herself was omitted from the new list.

“ How contemptible !

“ Contemptible enough ! but to reach half way up the ladder of parvenuism, serves only to dazzle and dizzy the unwary. The wings of our pretenders had now sprouted ; the following year, Lady Lavinia heard of them as having been undertaken by a dowager duchess, and saw no more of them.”

“ And the dowager duchess ? ”

“ Doubled them up, and laid them on the shelf. Their means had been just equal to the calibre of a Lady Ap Shenkin. To merit the patronage of a Lady Lavinia, they engaged twice as good a house and establishment ; and

Lo ! two turtles smok’d upon the board !

But, for the level of her grace, a French cook and St. James’s Square seemed indispensable ; and that last campaign in London, sent them to Glamorganshire ; lionized to utter extinction.”

By the way, my friend, Lady Cis, is something of a mistress of the ceremonies. With respect to myself, as Sir Jenison is the head of Colonel Delaval’s family, she could do no less than present me to her *clique*. But she is too apt to traffic in little notes of nothingness, using all the insinuations that satin paper and *phrases de caresse* can supply, to get Mrs. This invited to the duke’s ball, and Lady That noticed by the duchess. On Wednesday mornings she is always in a nervous flutter of spirits, about a voucher for Miss Ellen, or a subscription for

Lady Sophia. Mr. Penrhyn, indeed, declares — but I am not sure that *his* declarations would grace the pages of my journal.

Heigho! what an infinite deal of nothing have I already written down! In malice? — I hope not! It was my desire to comment upon things, rather than upon persons; or, if persons, those whose conversation was improving, and whose example edifying. Living, as I have done, in what the Americans would call “the bush,” I longed to form for myself a circle of enlightened men and women,—the makers, not the ingredients of society; people who, while they walk with the century, are able to give a guess at the century to come. But one of Lady Cecilia’s first and most earnest interdictions was against entangling myself in a *bureau d’esprit*. Nothing, she protests, so dangerous! Lady —, it seems, has brought the thing into disrepute, by fawning on every creature that wears a quill; by which means, individuals have been introduced into society, whom it is as unsafe to know as to decline knowing.

“ Pore over their books as much as you please, but do not so much as dip into the authors ! ” said she, when I proposed an introduction to one of the most popular writers of the day. “ These people expend their spirit on their works ; the part that walks through society, is a mere lump of clay,—like the refuse of the wine-press after the wine has been expressed. In conversing with a clever author, you sometimes see a new idea brighten his eye, or create a smile round his lip ; but for worlds he would not give it utterance. It belongs to his next work,—and is instantly booked in the ledger of his daily thoughts—value three and sixpence. The man’s mind is his mine,—he can’t afford to work it gratis, or give away the produce.”

Armine and her husband are come at last ! —The happiest moment I have experienced in London, was that in which, for the first time these four years, I folded her in my arms ! —Highly as I regard my brother-in-law, I should have been just as well pleased had Herbert allowed my first interview with my sister to be

a *tête-à-tête*; but we shall meet every day for the next three months, and find plenty of opportunities to talk over things and people whom I could not frankly discuss in his presence; indeed, I was quite sufficiently taken up with examining his wife, and noting the progress of time in her dear, familiar face. And how dear,—how *very* dear,—is a familiar face, beheld after long estrangement! They may talk of returning to the scenes of our youth,—the old mansion, the well-known orchard, the favourite hawthorn hedge,—but restore to *me* the sunny smile, the open countenance, the loving eyes of *her* who made those scenes delightful;—*there* is a positive happiness, worth worlds of poetry.

But, after all, *is* this possible?—The spring comes with its blossoms to the old orchard, and the genial month of May brightens up the fragrant hawthorn-hedge, as when first a sheet of snow-white blossoms was flung over its early verdure; while human life boasts but its single spring! After one brief summer, the face and feelings go out of bloom together; and who can

bear to see the hollowing eye, the sallowing cheek, the contracting brow, we remember so bright with the impulses of youth?

But *I*, too, am growing poetical, and this my journal is solemnly pledged to matter of fact. Idylliumism apart—I *was* grieved to perceive that the cares of life had somewhat tarnished the beautiful face of my sister. Surely vanity does not mislead me into believing that, although a year younger than myself, she might pass for ten years my senior? Yet *I* have spent a life of disappointment and repining, while *she* is unconscious of a single sorrow. Have *I* less depth of feeling—less force of character, than my sister?—Perhaps so!—Perhaps she has grieved for *me*. Perhaps her regrets for the weary and unprofitable years *I* have been passing, have created a care for her?—But I forget!—Armine has four children; and experience has not initiated me into the pains and pleasures produced by the responsibility of motherhood.

The unfavourable change I noticed in Armine's looks, struck me still more forcibly in

the manners of her husband. Herbert, although an excellent, is certainly not an ingratiating person. He is fond of naked truths, and I am modest enough to like even the truth a little *drapée*. Armine admired my house. Herbert was silent till she questioned him. “ Is it not charming? Is it not a perfect *bijou*? ”

“ By *bijou*, I conclude you mean trinket? ” he replied; “ which perfectly explains my objection to it. Trinkets are not for daily use; and this house seems made for any thing but to live in. I dare say I am wrong,—but I detest gimeracks.”

“ It was fitted up for your poor friend Thistledown,” added Armine, apparently with a view to his conciliation.

“ Was it?—I should have fancied it fitted up for an actress,” replied Herbert, rising, and trying to look through the conservatory into the Park. “ Ass as Thistledown was, I should have hardly thought him capable of spoiling a fine prospect like this, by planting it out with geraniums.”

This is the first ungracious word I have heard respecting my pretty house; and, perhaps, the only sincere one! At all events, the thing might have been said more courteously. Some people are perpetually declaring — “ I told him plainly ;” as if any one had a right to tell another a thing “ plainly !” — Better tell it “ prettily,” and the lesson is learned with patience.

Significant looks passed between Armine and her husband, at the mention of several persons I named, as my intimate associates. Had he not been there, she would have probably explained herself; but Herbert shewed such a disposition to be uncivil, by observing, “ All these are Lady Cecilia’s people. *She*, I conclude, has been your bear-leader ;” that my sister seemed afraid of provoking further comment. To-morrow, I shall manage to see her alone; and inquire her objections to the Percys, Penrhyn, Lady Grace Gosling, and others.

I was at Almack’s to-night for the first time; — most brilliant! — most beautiful! I

dined first with Cecilia, and sat next Hanton ; who, between the courses, noticed that the *fraicheur* of my toilet was equal to that of the mullet,—a great compliment from *him*.

“ You are going to a ball, eh ? — Great Heaven ! how can people *dérouter* themselves by going to balls ? — Hot rooms — noisy music — dust — citric acid ices — and spurious champagne ! — Your appetite nauseated next day, and your temples beating out of time like a blacksmith’s anvil ! — And Almack’s too, — a *public* ball ! — I look upon Almack’s as the worst thing going.”

My *gaieté de cœur* was not to be damped by his affectation ; and when the clock struck eleven, I entered, on Cecilia’s arm, that long and echoing ball-room, where so many hearts, promises, and fans, have been broken, — from the time of hoop petticoats and red-heeled pumps, to those of aërophane crape and patent varnish. The ball-room, without much elegance of architecture or decoration, is gay and well-lighted. It has been noticed, and I think truly, that there is not in London a room

where beauty looks more beautiful. Nothing there to distract attention from the human face divine ;—no pictures—no statues—no gilding—no porcelain—no flowers. You have pretty music to listen to, pretty faces to look at, and the best society, in the easiest and most agreeable way. Paris, Vienna, Naples, have nothing to compare with Almack's: no weekly *point de réunion*, where people are sure of meeting those who suit them, and whom they suit. But then, in what other capital does fashion hold a reign so absolute as in London? Where was the throne of exclusivism ever so firmly established as at Almack's?

The *very* fine complain that the thing is *en décadence*, and no longer the Delhai Lama-ish temple that it was

“ In my cold youth, when George the Fourth was king.”

But no matter! It is still the conservatory, *par excellence*, for our budding roses and rare exotics; the rendezvous for seeing with the least possible trouble the greatest possible number of one's acquaintances.

What a host of hands were extended to me to-night by old friends! what curtsies innumerable was I forced to perform in honour of new introductions! Lady Cecilia is of opinion that, as my house is not large enough to give a ball (a thing which amounts to a publication of one's visiting list), I may as well know every body, and go only to those whom I think desirable. An apology is easily sent to people one wishes to send to Coventry!

Among other merits, Almack's has the especial privilege of affording the only classic (ball) ground for ministerial and political celebrities. Lord North frowned there in his time; Lord Castlereagh (Holy-alliance Castlereagh), in *his*; and the great men of to-day follow in the steps of those of yesterday. To-night we had ——, looking sallow and saturnine, but sentimental withal; and I am sure that his oratory is apt to touch as many hearts as heads.

Thursday morning.—Having had my horses out till nearly four, I shall not be able to get to the Herberts' to-day. But as Armine can com-

mand her husband's arm, I hope she will walk to me.

Six o'clock, and my room only just clear of morning visitors ! I am tired out with chit-chat,—buried under a shower of rose-leaves ! First came Lady Evelyn Beresford, all softness and grace, who never speaks above a whisper, and dies of every breath of air, even in a westerly wind. She has always a *very* little cough — so small, that it seems like the voice of the invisible girl, to come out of another room ; and just now, poor Lady Evelyn

“ Dies of a rose in Homœopathic pain ;”

dines at three o'clock, on half a snipe, and keeps her children in Lancashire, being too nervous to bear their noise within two hundred miles of her great rambling house in Privy Gardens. She comes to town for the season, only to put herself under the tortures of the newest fashionable quack ; and is all amazement that any one can bear the fatigue of dressing and the exhaustion of hot rooms. It is needless to remind her that her own *demie-*

toilette costs *her* twice the trouble of our ball dresses, or that the thermometer in her boudoir stands at 85°. She has no faith in the indispositions of other women. Most of us experience a jealous pang on hearing the beauty of some rival lauded, apparently at our own expense; but Lady Evelyn is as tenacious of the word "invalid," as Mrs. Percy of the terms "wit" or "belle."

"They talk of the Duchess of — being delicate," said she, in an indignant tone, this morning; "a woman who has nursed all her children must have the constitution of an Irish charwoman!"

She will not even allow one of her friends to be ill,—hints that it is an idle pretension,—and has actually misgivings of imposition, after they are dead and gone.

Sir Jenison Delaval came in before she left me; who, being a constitutional croaker, a dear lover of bad tidings—(Lady Cis declares that, had he been sent for news out of the ark, he would have brought back a sprig of yew

instead of an olive-branch !) informed us that Lord Clendinning had lost his wife.

“Lady Clendinning dead ?” cried Lady Evelyn. “Impossible ! you must have been misinformed !”

“I fear not. She died last night.”

“Last night ?—oh dear, no. Mr. Beresford was with his father yesterday morning, just after Dr. Holland had left the house ; and Holland gave it as his opinion that she was in no sort of danger. Holland is aware of her foible of fancying herself ten times worse than she really is.”

“In this case, poor woman, her fancy was confirmed. She said she should not live through the day, and expired in the course of the evening.”

“My dear Sir Jenison, believe me, it was some other person. Lady Clendinning is one of the last women in the world to die in that sort of way, of a common cold.”

“But it was *not* a common cold — it was an inflammation of the lungs.”

“Well ! common or uncommon, I know

she was at Devonshire House on Thursday week; and you may rely upon it she is no more dead than I am.”

“ It was precisely at Devonshire House that she had some difficulty in getting up her carriage,—stood in a draught of air without her cloak,—and never quitted her bed afterwards. Blisters, bleeding, leeches — nothing could save her.”

“ How very absurd ! Lady Clendinning has a horror of blisters—never put one on in her life ; and as to bleeding, the very sight of a lancet would cure her. I shall go and call on her to-morrow.”

“ Better not, my dear madam. You will find Clendinning House shut up. My information *must* be correct, for I had it from Screw, the upholsterer, who is generally civil enough to let me know when he has some great funeral in hand.”

“ I dare say he was sent for to make an easy sofa or chair for her,” persisted Lady Evelyn, “ and fancied, as the knocker was tied up, that she *must* be dead.”

“ No such thing, I assure you,” snarled Sir Jenison. “ He was sent for to ——”

“ I don’t believe a word of it!” interrupted Lady Evelyn, having gradually raised her small sucking-dove voice to tornado pitch; “ and I will go to Clendinning House this very minute.”

Before Sir Jenison had settled his wig and his temper, after her exit, “ came there a certain lord,” who asked permission last night to pay his respects to me in St. James’s Place; and as he is young, handsome, and withal reputed agreeable, I made him one of those unmeaning affirmative shrugs, expressive of neither too much nor too little satisfaction at the proposal. Now that I have seen him again, and studied him at leisure, I heartily rejoice at not having been warmer in my acceptance of his civilities. Lord Lancaster seems to be an adept in that fashionable school of superciliousness which renders young Englishmen so ridiculous. Till the age of thirty, your listless lord takes refuge in finery from his own insignificance, —knows nobody,—goes nowhere,—can find

nothing to eat, — nothing to read, — is very little aware of what you are saying to him, and still less of what he utters in reply. *After* thirty, unless improved by having amalgamated with reasonable society, he retreats anew into whatever may be the pet club of the day — White's, the Travellers', Crockford's, or a successor, still to arise. From that moment he knows nobody but the fellows at the club ; goes nowhere but to the club ; admits of no eating but the dinners or suppers of the club — no reading but its journals and periodicals. He meets a man in society, and if a member of the same, offers to *put him down* there ; if not a member, but worthy so to be, he offers to *put him up* there. That goodly community he holds to constitute the human species ; for *him* there is *no* world elsewhere !

Lord Lancaster is at present in the incipient stage of listlessnessism. At present, he knows nothing, and nobody, on the face of the created globe. He came into my drawing-room, evidently prepared for a *tête-à-tête*, and to make it agreeable to both parties ; but the moment he

saw Sir Jenison Delaval, a man with whom he has no visiting-acquaintance; he froze into a statue of snow, to make it evident, that an introduction to the stranger was out of the question. Instead of his florid eloquence of last night, he emitted only monosyllables in reply to the diffuse commentary on the weather, with which I was obliged to fill up the awkward pause that ensued; and, instead of his graceful ease on the satin sofa at Almack's among those certified of his *caste*, he turned his eyes neither to the right nor left, lest, peradventure, they should fall upon an object of dubious recognizability. So complete a man in buckram never was it my lot to see.

Before his lordship's joints could be unstiffened, or his dignity relaxed, by the departure of poor unconscious Sir Jenison, in rattled Count Szchazoklwonski, a wild Hungarian, and a great friend of Lady Cecilia, who has a propensity for tattling bad English.

“ Ha! my freind, Sare Delafals!” cried he, “ enchanted to met you. Receife your polite cart of dinner—will axcep, most happee. Who

that stranshe mans?" whispered he, leaning towards me.

"Lord Lancaster," replied I, in the same low tone.

"Lancasters? do I not knew heem? an Irizh peer, eh, yees?"

"A Scotch one, I believe," said I, amused by his barbaresque self-possession, under the scrutinizing glances of the exclusive.

"Scosh? aha! Scosh, I tink. Good day, milor, good day, your shervanth. You are of Scoshland, I find. I have great regard for Scoshland. I go to Scoshland, last sheason, shoot the moors; leef on groushe and veeshky, veeshky and groushe; I have great regard for Scoshland. Pray, milor, can you told me vare I gets di genoing Scosh peel?"

"Peel?" reiterated his lordship.

"Count Szchazoklwonski probably means Scotch marmalade, made of orange-peel," said I, in perfect simplicity.

"I means no such tings," cried the count; "widsh your kind forgive me, I means *peel*,—Scosh *peel*,—veesh I took ven indish-

pose, in de moor ; and veesh cure me like vonder ! ”

“ Scotch *pills*,” cried I, unable to repress a laugh.

But it was no laughing matter. The colour rose to Lord Lancaster’s temples, and he pulled up his collar with a jerk, as he would have pulled up a hard-mouthinged horse.

“ Your friend seems to take me for an apothecary,” said he, addressing me ; but disdaining to notice the count.

“ Million pardonsh, milor,” replied Szchazoklwonski, amazed at having given offence : “ miladi spoke you as peer of Scoshland ; thought you very natural know de Scosh peel. Not de leash affronts in de worral.”

It is impossible to describe the air of Lord Lancaster, conscious of having been made ridiculous, and apprehensive of rendering himself more so before “ Sare Delafals ;” for the count’s apostrophe had taught him to know the uncouth man in the corner, not only for the mate of the fashionable Lady Cecilia, but actually for a member of his club ; whom not to know

argued himself, if not unknown, at least un-knowing.

To-night I am going to the Duke of Merioneth's, dining first with the Percys; so that I shall actually pass the second day of Armine's sojourn in town without seeing her. How mortifying!

Friday night.—I seem destined to meet with *contrariétés*. This morning, I determined to sally forth across the Parks, to visit my sister, attended by my servant. But, just as I had reached the gate of the Green Park, a gentleman, who had been cantering gently along Constitution Hill, drew up, gave his horse to his groom, and I found myself escorted by Mr. Penrhyn.

“Am I indiscreet in inquiring whither Mrs. Delaval is bound at so unseasonable an hour?” said he. “Is it some benevolent action that takes you abroad so early? I fear not! for Charity, we are told, begins at home! Perhaps Madame Payne has received her despatches from Herbault, and you are one of the

favoured few admitted to the privy council of *les modes*? Or you are sitting for your picture? — Yes! you are sitting for your picture, and choose to arrive at Chalon's door with the bloom of exercise upon your cheek! — I take it for granted, Chalon is the man, as the only artist whose style is worthy of your own —

“ Hair loosely flowing — robes as free.”

“ My intent is neither wicked nor charitable,” said I; “ nor is my face about to borrow charms from either a painter or a milliner. I am simply going to visit my sister, Mrs. Herbert, who is just arrived from the country.”

“ Ah! you have a sister? Not the wife, I trust, of a certain morose Henry Herbert, with whom I used to quarrel at Eton and Christchurch?”

“ A certain Henry Herbert, certainly, and both of Eton and Oxford; but by no means a morose one.”

“ My hearty congratulations, then, to his fair lady, on the reformation she has effected!

To do poor Herbert justice, he *had* some pretext for ill-humour. It has been his fate, through life, to come in second best. His father is an old baronet, with a princely estate; but my friend was born eleven months after a stout, thriving, active, elder brother. Till ten years old, he was himself a handsome lad; caught the small-pox, and became honey-combed for life! His younger brother has changed his name for a fortune, left him by a rich godmother; his elder succeeded to the title and family property. Henry Herbert, I conclude, is still Henry Herbert; a man without a profession, because he is so near being a man of fortune; but who, with his independence of 1785*l.* per annum, is the most dependent of human beings! What you have just told me, completes the catalogue of his misfortunes; — he is married to Mrs. Delaval's sister, instead of to herself!"

"He is, indeed, much to be pitied," said I, affecting to laugh off Mr. Penrhyn's compliment, as we reached the door of Armine's house, in New Norfolk Street; "but, as an-

other minute will bring me into the presence of your victim, you must permit me to wish you good morning."

"Victim, indeed!" ejaculated Penrhyn, raising his hat as the servant opened the door. "Herbert is even a more unhappy dog than I thought him; to live in New Norfolk Street, and on the wrong side of the way!"

Certainly my brother-in-law's face *did* look most lugubrious when I entered the breakfast-room. The table was covered with cold tea, stiffened muffins, warm butter, tepid coffee, empty egg-shells! The husband was grumbling over the denunciations of an opposition paper; the wife trying to silence the chattering children, who prevented his croakings from becoming audible!

"Why, my dear Armine, did not Herbert bring you to see me yesterday?" I inquired, as soon as I had taken my place.

"He thought it would be far easier for your carriage and horses to bring you to see *us*," replied Herbert, taking up his own defence.

“ My horses and servants had been out all night.”

“ *Yourself*, of course, remaining at home?”

“ No. If you remember, I told you I was going to Almack’s; and last night, I was at Merioneth House.”

“ But people do not remain all night at Almack’s; and you (and your horses) were not at Merioneth House, I imagine, before ten o’clock?”

“ Not till eleven. But I was not sure of finding you, if I came in the evening.”

“ There were two good arguments that your sister, at least, would be at home. Like most recently arrived country cousins, she has nothing to wear; and, like most poor men’s wives, no horses to drive.”

“ Let us go to the drawing-room, and talk over your parties of last night,” cried Armine, the peace-maker; “ it is enough that you are here at last.”

And to the drawing-room I followed her, leading one little stumbling girl, who did not choose to be carried, while *she* carried a heavy

boy, who did not choose to walk. But even the drawing-room was calculated to throw a damp on our spirits. Armine's arrival in town is so recent, that her house has not yet acquired an inhabited look. The lustres are in canvass bags; the frames of the glasses and pictures under dirty gauze. The covers remain on the furniture; with the exception of the table-covers, which are doubled up and laid aside. No books about—no flowers—no knick-knacks—no any thing! Nothing seems at home in the room but the poker, stuck familiarly into the sulky smoky fire.

“ Ah! this looks delightful,” cried Herbert, shrugging his shoulders, after having opened another window to let out the smoke. “ Nothing so charming as a fifth-rate London house, to people who entertain the foolish ambition of deserting a comfortable residence, to come to town for the season.”

“ But you used to like London?” said I.

“ Yes—when I had nothing else to like, and a club was my substitute for a home. But, with four children, and scarcely two thousand

a-year, I am content to remain in Bedfordshire. Indeed, this will be decidedly the last year of our coming. Next season, I shall let this confounded smoky hole, and get three or four hundred pounds for it from some valetudinarian member, wanting to be near the Parks. By the way, what have you done with Penrhyn?—I saw him walk up to the door with you?"

"Then you also saw him turn away as I entered?"

"With no small satisfaction! I was afraid he might not be aware how little I am disposed to welcome such a visitor. I have known Penrhyn all my life, and disliked him as long; a man incapable of doing a generous thing, or saying a kind one. Penrhyn is by nature a dirty fellow. You know him to be rich, only because he is purse-proud; nay, he almost laments the prosperity which leaves him no excuse for being a *pique-assiette*. Although a man of family and high connexions, Penrhyn is as abject a tuft-hunter as if born a feather-merchant in the Borough."

“ He must have grievously incensed you,” said I, laughing at his vehemence, “ to induce you to take the trouble of uttering so violent a Philippic.”

“ Not he! — no one more insignificant in my eyes. At Eton, he was an empty, sneering boy ; at Oxford, a hanger-on upon poor lords, who borrowed his bank-notes,—or dunce lords, who borrowed his reading,—or millionaire commoners, who borrowed the illustration of his aristocratic name : for Penrhyn is so accustomed to despise every thing, that he has no great opinion of himself ; and, however good his position, cannot be satisfied without trying to hang himself a peg above it. Armine, my love, pray ring the bell for the nurse : Maria will certainly catch cold, running up and down the balcony.—No ! pray, don’t shut the window ; we shall be stifled with smoke, or the child will cut herself, trying to fall through the glass.”

A ring, a roar, a scolding,—and my little niece and nephew were despatched to the nursery. But the ill-humour of papa was a fix-

ture. How few, how *very* few men understand the advantage of making themselves agreeable by their own fireside! I detest a husband eternally squabbling in a *tête-à-tête*, but becoming bright and sunshiny the moment a visitor is announced! My visit to my sister was rendered thoroughly unpleasant by Herbert's want of self-control. Yet, had he been in any house but his own, he would have suffered the chimney to smoke, the children to squall, and the breakfast-table to look disorderly, without allowing his temper to be ruffled. I would not hear of his walking back with me to St. James's Place ; and even allowed him to surmise that Mr. Penrhyn was waiting in the Park to offer me his arm. It was quite a relief to me, and, I fancy, to his wife, when, finding his services refused, he took himself off to his club.

After all, clubs are not altogether so bad a thing for family-men. They act as conductors to the storms usually hovering in the air. The man forced to remain at home, and vent his crossness on his wife and children, is a much

worse animal to bear with than the man who grumbles his way to Pall-Mall, and, not daring to swear at the club servants, or knock about the club furniture, becomes socialized into decency. Nothing like the subordination exercised in a community of equals, for reducing a fiery temper. It is not the influence of the colonel or the major which curbs the violence of the irascible young ensign, so much as that of his brother ensign, who joined six months before him, and is already subdued to the discipline of the regiment. I dare say Herbert is tolerably amicable in his own neighbourhood, among 'squires of his own fortune and degree.

Luckily, there are times and places where all the world puts on its company face. At Merioneth House, last night, what a host of smilers! Not a jealous scowl, not an envious sneer, not an angry frown, to be seen! In spite of all the rivalship, all the vindictive feeling, pent up in the four hundred human breasts drawing breath under its gorgeous roof, all was courtesy, all kindness. Not a care presumed to shew its face in that fairy palace. A temple

of joy,—its votaries must be joyous. After an hour or two passed in such a spot, one might almost become a convert to the notion of the poor, that, in this world at least, Dives, in his purple and fine linen, is exempt from tribulation.

It is, perhaps, owing to the domestic plagues which subdued my temper, that I resided so many years at Delaval Castle, surrounded by mud hovels, without imagining that, because I was lady of all I surveyed, I was paramount in all other times and places. Nothing, I perceive, is so unpretending as a thoroughly Londonized person. *There*, gentlemen are accustomed to give way to lords; lords to royalties; and society is as nicely matched, each under each, as the voices of the hounds of Theseus. But divers of my fellow denizens of Ireland, and others escaped from long exile in the colonies, find it difficult to divest themselves of the influence of their local importance. The other night, at Almack's, I noticed Sir William O'Blarney, who has a family-place some miles from Ballyshumna, and was accounted a fine

thing in Dublin, pushing and shoving in a crowd of peers and peeresses, as he would have done in a mob in Sackville Street! He could not conceive why they did not make room for *him*, and *his* partner; and fancied himself as grand and influential in the presence of the Duke of Wellington, Lord Grey, two or three German sovereign princes, and two or three hundred of the leading nobility, as when receiving the obeisances of a dozen hatless and shoeless retainers, in whose eyes Sir William O'Blarney, own cousin, twice removed, to my Lord O'Blarney, of the fine ould ancient house of O'Blarney, of Blarney Castle, in the county of Fermanagh, is secondary in importance only to the Prince of Wales! To do poor Sir William justice, his partner, Lady Theodosia Farinafad, seemed quite as well inclined to assert her mistaken dignity as himself. I saw her plant herself before one of the fairest and gentlest of the Howards, who was forced to retreat, and find a place in another quadrille; and the disdainful air with which Sir William and herself surveyed, from force of habit, all and sundry

in the room, was really amusing. At last, as they were elbowing their way together towards Lady Theodosia's chaperon, I saw the ridiculous couple stand aside, as if conscious of a superior presence, and doubted not that a member of the royal family had come in. I raised my glass; but, lo! in lieu of a royal highness, saw nothing but a fat old dowager,—a quondam lady-lieutenant. Sir William, remembering how low he used to bow to her at the Castle, having resumed his former obsequiousness. Great as he was, he felt an ex-vice-queen to be greater. The minnows shrank in presence of what had been a Triton in their little eyes.

Lister was right in his assertion that travel is indispensable to liberalize the mind. After making the tour of Europe, Sir William O'Blarney will probably return to his country, a polished, open-minded, open-hearted man. But it will require many a rub to teach him the useful art of self-knowledge. One lesson was bestowed on him the other night. Lady Cecilia's sister, the somewhat exclusive marchioness of Clackmannan, sent for her carriage,

and took away her beautiful daughter, Lady Alicia Spottiswode, the moment Sir William asked her to dance. “ It is Alicia’s first season,” whispered Lady Cecilia, observing my suppressed smile; “ *et il ne faut pas s’encaniller !*”

Do not let me seem to scandalize my Irish friends. I see nothing in London—no! not even at Merioneth House—superior to Lord and Lady Rossana, or their sons and daughters. But the Rossanas are people of the world; and have supported the reputation of their country for beauty and wit, at Paris, Rome, Naples, Vienna, and Berlin. It struck me last night, that Mr. Penrhyn was paying attention to the youngest and prettiest of the daughters. But I am satisfied that Lady Sophia has too much dignity of mind to accept a man universally stigmatized as the *cavaliere servente* of a married woman.

Poor Sir Jenison Delaval has just attained a crisis in his destiny, which makes the matrimonial yoke he has been wearing, till it has grown into his flesh, sit extremely uneasy.

Clarence Delaval, his only son, who has turned out as wild as the slip of such a stock was likely to prove, has just been rusticated at college; and his father and Lady Cecilia are at variance touching his future destination. Lady Cis wants to send him to travel, and, on his return from the Continent, place him in the Blues: Sir Joseph talks of keeping him under his own eye (such an eye as it is!), and putting him into the Foreign Office or the Treasury, to tame him down. The idea of the handsome, clever Clarence, chained to a desk in a Government office, would make Lady Cecilia furious, if it did not make her laugh. But, while papa and mamma are settling their differences of opinion, my little cousin, Clarence, remains *en pénitence* in Grosvenor Square; smuggled by his mother, night after night, to the Opera, Almack's, and every ball worth mentioning, in order to keep him out of mischief; or, rather, to keep him *to* mischief of what she considers the right kind.

“A boy of twenty *must* play the fool,” is her argument; “and it is better he should

play the fool in good company. Precisely at Clarence's age, the tone of a man's character is decided. If shy, he flies to indifferent society to be courted and made a fuss with ; if a sportsman, he associates with those who look upon ignorance as eminence, and vulgarity as virtue. With *us*, he will perceive that gallantry and *écarté* are not incompatible with public distinctions ; he will see our great politicians crowned with laurels mingled with roses, and find that a man may command the attention of the House one night, and of Crockford's the next. If my son *must* be a *roué*, let him, at least, be a *roué de bonne compagnie*."

Sir Jenison, on the other hand, does not subscribe to the necessity of his being a *roué* at all ; and talks of the propriety of finishing the young man's education, in case he should be called on by his county to bring him forward at the next election. But Lady Cecilia, who says little, does all ; and, as Clarence finds it delightful to waltz every night, and ride every morning, with his pretty cousin Alicia, it is probable he will manage to remain in

town for the rest of the season,—then complete his education on the moors, or at Lucca, or the Taunus baths.

Ever since my arrival in town, I have seen a huge “ TO LET, FURNISHED, THIS SPACIOUS MANSION,” pasted into the windows of the house adjoining mine; and fully appreciated the advantage of having no greater disturbance to my South-west, than the occasional modest knocks of persons coming to view the premises. Last week, alas! I was roused from my dream of bliss by an awkward rat-tat-tat, and a sort of scuffle in the street, proceeding from a family coach with four posters, and six inside; and a barouche and pair, full of ladies’ maids. A marvellous explosion of scolding, squabbling, swearing, and unpacking, ensued; and, within four-and-twenty hours of the great event, a piano was rattling in the back dining-room,—a harp twanging in the front drawing-room; the under footman played the fiddle in the pantry, and three children and a teething infant were skirmishing and roaring in the nurseries; to say nothing of a never-ceasing

call for “Jane” or “John” upon the staircase ; — two slaves of the *ring*, whom I take to be the housemaid and footman.

“Mr. and Mrs. Gresham Ronsham, of Wrangham Hall,” are come to town, it seems, for the season, to bring out three elder daughters, and bring up three younger ones ; and the stir and bustle of the whole family is little inferior to the confusion of Babel. Such double knocks, such single, such eternal ringing of bells and slamming of doors ; such arrivals of band-boxes, — square, circular, oval, great, small, middling ; such a throng of hack cabriolets in attendance — coiffeurs, dancing-masters, Italian-masters ; — such apothecarial chariots for the teething baby — such compendious family-coaches with visitors for papa and mamma. Like all great country families, they are great givers of great dinners ; and the savoury fumes of gravy soup rise to my windows long before I rise to my breakfast. Decidedly the party-wall of a London house ought, by act of parliament, to be two bricks thicker. Three times a-week, one daughter has Signor Bravura and

his solfeggio, with every day a three hours' practice; I can even overhear John and Jane reprimanding Master Robert for sliding on the balusters; and yesterday, Miss Maria had a visit from the dentist, attended with screams that caused my blood to stagnate.

It is, in fact, surprising how much re-fitting and re-modelling is indispensable for poor people, who have been figuring with credit at their country-seat, to pass current in the crowd of London. Milliners, mantua-makers, stay-makers, shoe-makers, hosiers, glovers, jewellers, hair-dressers, are set in motion merely that three moderately well-looking girls may pass an evening in society without incurring the charge of being quizzes. The parents worry themselves to death to discover the right way to do the right thing; spend half-a-year's income in three months; kill their old butler, lame their favourite horses, break their new carriage, lose their time and temper; are cited by the newspapers as having been present at some Caledonian or Hibernian ball; in May, as having arrived at their house in St. James's

Place, from their seat in Lincolnshire ; and in August, as having departed from the same to the same ; while, after all, one daughter marries the curate of the parish, and another, the second son of a neighbouring 'squire.

Amongst the numerous offences committed against me by Herbert the other morning, was a formal invitation to dinner. With perfect sincerity, I gave to him and Armine a general invitation to my house ; begging them only to send down to St. James's Place in the morning, whenever they had no better engagement, in order to make sure that I dined at home.

“ General invitations go for less than nothing, in my opinion,” was his ungracious reply. “ In proof of which, *I* invite *you* to dine here on Saturday the fourteenth of May, to meet a pleasant party, and eat a detestable dinner.”

“ Invite my sister to dinner at a week’s date ?” interrupted Armine. “ On the contrary, pray ask her to dine with us, *en famille*, to-morrow !”

“ Our specimen of a breakfast, *en famille*, this morning, proved, no doubt, very attractive ? ” said Herbert. “ No, no ! no family dinners for a fine lady like Mrs. Delaval, who cannot live without her Almack’s and Merioneth House, and who keeps a *cordon bleu* of a *chef*, if I am to trust to the low bow I saw bestowed on her carriage yesterday, from Crockford’s window, by George Hanton. A family dinner ! — boiled soles and shrimp sauce, a fat leg of mutton, and sallow potatoes, peeled with a knife ! Faugh ! ”

And, in spite of all I could urge, he held me engaged to dinner for the fourteenth. Now, though I should dearly like to dine with the Herberts alone, and chat with Armine after dinner, I have not the slightest inclination to derange them by preparations for a party. I perfectly remember in my aunt Margaret’s establishment, the general disarrangement produced by the occasional ceremony of giving a dinner ; besides which, I have been forced by his peremptory proposal, to put off a weekly standing engagement to the Delavals ; where,

on Saturdays, a party of parliamentary men always assembles. But my penance was to be ; and, to-day, at seven o'clock, I drove to New Norfolk Street. The moment I entered, I felt persuaded things would go wrong. The footman looked stiff and stupid in a new livery, as fine as yellow plush could make him ; and the butler, as sulky as a country butler always looks under the temporary subjection of a *maître d'hôtel* hired for the day. Armine was not dressed when I arrived, and Herbert stood on the hearth-rug, swearing at her dilatoriness, and the overpowering perfume of some jonquils and heliotropes, with which she had ornamented the *jardinière*. His pettishness was soon silenced by the announcement of a Sir Dunstan Forbes, a tall, square-shouldered, fussy man, too huge of stature, and too loud of tone for so small a mansion ; and, immediately afterwards, a thundering knock, and Armine hurried in, drawing on her gloves, just in time to receive Sir John and Lady Farrington ; the lady, dazzling in a full-trimmed lilac satin gown, diamonds, and

a wreath of roses ! The sun shone brightly upon our finery and ill-humour ; and every time the door was opened, came a powerful whiff of the unwholesome vapour of charcoal. Two other men dropped slowly in ; but the remaining two, who were to make out our party of ten, not yet making their appearance, the children were asked for by Lady Farrington, a Bedfordshire neighbour of my sister, apparently well-versed in her family concerns. Herbert interposed his interdiction, saying, that children before dinner were a bore. Armine looked nervous — Lady Farrington pleaded with affected earnestness ; and, after ten minutes' disputing, the nursery bell was rung, — the children, evidently waiting the summons, in all their company finery arrived, and set up a quartett of roaring, or rather a glee — for Montresor, the eldest boy, ran boldly in and climbed on Lady Farrington's lilac satin knees ; while poor dear Armine, after vainly endeavouring to pacify them, and eke the head nurse, who bridled with suppressed indignation, on hearing her master assert, that they

were the worst managed brats in England, sentenced them to return to the place from whence they came.

Herbert, looking at his watch, proclaimed that it was half-past seven, and talked of ordering dinner. Armine pleaded that Lord Lancaster was always late ; and that, from Spring Gardens to New Norfolk Street was a vast distance for Lord Hampton. The Album was accordingly re-opened, and re-admired by those nearest the table ; the “Keepsake,” and the “Book of Beauty,” were commented upon, according to individual tastes ; and Sir Dunstan inquired of Sir John, whether he had been late at the house the preceding night, in order to prove to the two silent gentlemen in black, that they were in presence of honourable members.

Again there came a pause ; and Sir Dunstan attacked Lady Farrington on the exhibition at Somerset House ; *he* giving as his own the sturdy criticisms of the Athenæum, and *she* replying in the flimsy of the Court Magazine. Herbert was growing flushed, when a carriage

rattled to the door, and in came Lord Hampton, all bustle, fuss, and apology, affecting to pant for breath; shaking hands to the right and left, with the *empressement* of a man who arrives too late; bowing impertinently low to the two strangers, as if to announce himself most affably resigned to make the acquaintance of the whole injured company.

“I have a thousand apologies to offer to Mrs. Herbert,” spluttered his lordship, in an audible voice to her husband. “But the fact is, I uniformly dine at eight; and being fully persuaded that you had invited me at eight, I desired François to have my things ready for me at the usual hour. I was sauntering leisurely near the Mount Gate, at twenty minutes after seven, when, happening to meet Lancaster, he said, ‘I thought you were to dine at Herbert’s?’ adding something about an early dinner, which absolutely startled me. He observed that you were very considerate to dine at such an hour, in order to enable us to see something of the *Norma*. Believe me, I was horror-struck! — took but three minutes and a quarter to reach

Spring Gardens,—searched for your card—found it—gave myself five minutes to dress—waited only while my horses were putting to, and have now nothing left but to throw myself on Mrs. Herbert's good-nature."

This apology, which apology was none, was received with indulgence ; and the party, yawning and hungry, satisfied that Lord Lancaster intended to cut the affair altogether, fell upon him like cannibals, and were tearing him to pieces, when in he sauntered,—cool, undaunted, unapologizing,—bowing slightly to his hosts, saluting Lord Hampton with a glance, and totally unconscious of the presence of any other person. A dead silence ensued ; during which he glided across the room to make the inquiry *d'usage* of my sister. "Have you been out this morning ?—Lovely day !—exquisite weather !" while we all waited impatiently the announcement of dinner. But, as it may usually be observed in such cases, the dinner that has been kept waiting, in the end causes others to wait ; and more than a quarter of an hour elapsed before we found ourselves wedging our way

down to the dining-room, while little Horace Herbert was roaring his up to the nursery. I heard his father making goodnatured remarks to Lady Farrington, who was leaning on his arm ; while I followed, on that of Lord Hampton, into a dining-room overheated with Carcel lamps, lighted and smoking for the last two hours. In the act of sending away his scarcely tasted soup, Lord Lancaster, affecting to perceive me, made me a formal bend of recognition, while I swallowed in uneasy silence my cold turbot and warm cucumber.

At three out of every six of even the best dinners given in London, the company is ill-assorted, and the party dull. But, when damped by a really indifferent dinner, nothing can be more unsocial than such a meeting. Sir John and Lady Farrington talked Bedfordshire with Armine and Herbert, which, to all the rest of the party was Hebrew and Greek ; Lancaster and Hampton talked club to each other across the table, — a dialect equally mysterious to the uninitiated ; the two silent gentlemen grew absolutely dumb during the process of mastication ;

and Sir Dunstan, by whom I was seated, bored me by a series of fretful animadversions on the evils of the age,—abusing the post office,—reform-bill,—macadamization,—public places,—private society,—men and things,—women and books; and at every new topic of dissertation, ending by protesting that if the thing went on, he would certainly write a letter to the *Times*.

“ Any news from Hollybridge ? ” inquired Sir John, addressing my brother-in-law.

“ Nothing important. I had a letter from Thoms yesterday. They want rain. By the way, Thoms mentioned that Denis (Lord Forcefig’s head-keeper) had been over to our friend Smith, about a warrant for the people in Broomby Bottom. It seems they have now some grounds to go upon. Still I hope Smith will be cautious. Smith is apt to let his sportsmanlike feelings run away with him. That affair about the Oakley keepers did him a great deal of injury in the county. I trust Smith will be cautious.”

“ Did Thoms say, whether anything was

settled about slating the almshouses at Dudley? My man Robson was up last week on business at Smithfield; and he told me, that at the last meeting nothing was decided; adding (between ourselves) that every thing in that quarter was likely to remain at sixes and sevens till *we* were back again. Smith is a sad potterer, unless on matters connected with the sporting interest."

"Were you late last night?" inquired Lord Lancaster of Lord Hampton, in a cross fire.

"About three! I stayed out another rubber."

"It was going hard against you when I left. The admiral was getting fussy. I heard him call for a glass of Madeira."

"He lost sixteen points of five; and the night before, a couple of hundred against Hilton."

"He had better pull up. The admiral's play is worse than anything, except his luck."

"Have you heard that he has promised to put up Taffrail?"

"He had better let it alone. Taffrail was

with our squadron at Cherbourg last summer. We know him. It won't do."

" He was black-balled three times last winter at Paris."

" That argues nothing. The Carlist *clique* black-ball all the English upon principle. They have thrown over some of the best fellows in town; and shew no mercy to younger brothers like Taffrail. A low bow from Rothschild would have been his only guarantee."

" You were at the Opera, madam, on Saturday?" said Sir Dunstan, addressing me, meanwhile, with stately condescension;—to which inquiry I bowed an affirmative. " In that case, I trust you participated in the indignation I could scarcely repress at finding the last act of the *Gazza Ladra* substituted for the first act of the *Semiramide*. Who is to rely upon the veracity of the bills, if such abuses are tolerated? An individual pays his money for a ticket, upon the faith of the announcement, expecting to see the first act of the *Semiramide*: they give him the last act of the *Gazza Ladra*! He has, perhaps, seen

it before—perhaps repeatedly, and to satiety. Yet to this abuse the public are required tamely to submit! I fairly warn Monsieur Laporte, that, should he again presume to trifle in a similar manner with the forbearance of his subscribers, I will write a letter to the *Times*."

And this is rational conversation!—Heigho! heigho! heigho!—Miss Austin observes, in one of the best of her admirable novels, that "when lovely woman stoops to be disagreeable," the only art her guilt to cover is, like the lovely woman who stoops to folly, "*to die!*" Yet, what multitudes stoop to be disagreeable!—How many of those who are sulking with the world, from finding themselves less important, less beautiful, less lauded than they could wish, take refuge in the morasses of disagreeableness!—some looking prudish—some consequential—some pharisaical—some blue,—in the mistaken view of magnifying their nothingness. So that their presence do but impose upon the timid, the ignorant, and the weak, they are content. They forget that the world repays itself during their absence;—that they

must sometimes depart this city, and, at last, this life ; and that, if the ass avenged itself by spurning the dead lion, still more ignominiously are its hoofs applied upon a defunct asinine brother, equipped in a lion's skin !

Last night, at Mrs. Percy's, "Sare Delafals" brought in tidings, that Lady Kirkby was no more ! Lady Kirkby, it seems, was once a beauty and a wit,—an heiress in her youth, a countess in her middle age. Yet she lived without a friend, and died without a mourner ; for *she*, alas ! had stooped to be disagreeable. As a beauty, she was envious ; as a wit, spiteful ; as an heiress, selfish ; as a countess, insolent. To secure her supremacy in the fashionable world, she had dropped her own relations ; and at length, infirm and wrinkled before her time, by incessant wear and tear of temper, the world made mouths at her distresses. Her daughters disappointed her, by remaining single ; her sons thwarted her inclination, by marrying according to theirs. Vexed by her own family, she looked abroad for consolation ; hired a professional toady, and ga-

thered a whole batch of *protégées* under her wings. But even Toady and the Protected at last rebelled. Lady Kirkby's friendship was dreaded almost as much as her animosity ; she harrassed her allies scarcely less than her enemies. She was fine, she was nervous, she was susceptible,—she was, in short, eminently disagreeable ; and now that she is dead and gone, the two thousand tongues, so long kept still, per force of Terror, are wagging against her, as if to make up for loss of time. Warning ! warning ! warning !

To-morrow there is a Drawing-room, at which I am to be presented by the Marchioness of Clackmannan. I waited till Armine's arrival in town, hoping that Herbert would permit her to accompany me ; but he protests, that poor men's wives have no business at Court ; and Armine, with her usual gentle habit of accepting his opinions, assures me she is afraid of the heat.

A female Court must certainly be highly advantageous to the interests of commerce.

What an infinity of trivialities must be accomplished, in order to send one in good style to the drawing-room. My neighbours, the Ronshams, seem in a panic of agitation. The old horses have been crammed with beans; the old coach (and coachman, too, I fancy,) re-varnished; the old hammercloth re-fringed,—seeing that there was no time for more extensive preparations, and while waiting, this morning, full-dressed in my white satin and plumes, the summons of Lady Clackmannan, I had the amusement of seeing the Mamma Ronsham in pompadour and gold, looped up here, and flounced down there, bundled into the carriage, by her spouse, in his yeomanry uniform, looking vastly like Major Sturgeon; while the young ladies followed, in pink and silver, their elbows red by nature,—their ears and noses, by the effort of bringing-to the hooks and eyes of ill-fitting gowns. Better have powdered them after the fashion of their two bedizened footmen, whose heads exhibited a bushel of flour,—whose canes exceeded, in length, the

djereed of a Persian warrior,—and whose bouquets must have deprived Covent Garden of its last polyanthus.

After all, magnificence is a tawdry thing, when viewed under the searching blaze of sunshine. Jewels lack lustre,—gold appears mere tinsel,—the circumstantialities of dress are too much seen to admit of any general effect ; and even beauty's self becomes less beautiful. The exposure of the person imparts a meretricious air,—the complexion becomes moistened by the stifling atmosphere of the crowded rooms. As to ladies of a certain age, let them, above all things, avoid the drawing-room :—such a revelation of wrinkles, moles, beards, rouge, pearl-powder, pencilled eyebrows, false hair, and false teeth, as were brought to light, I could scarcely have imagined. Many faces, which I had thought lovely at Almack's, grew hideous when exposed to the tell-tale brightness of the meridian sun ; the consciousness of which degeneration rendered them anxious, fretful, and doubly frightful. Two or three dowagers, with

mouths full of gold wire, chinstays of blond to conceal their withered deficiencies, and *tulle illusion* tippets, were really horrific; painted sepulchres,—ghastly satires upon the hollowness of human splendour.

In general, the men suffered less by exposure than the women. In these times, so many uniforms are worn, and a well-padded, well-buckramed uniform goes so far towards the manufacture of a manly-looking man, that I had no fault to find, except with a few quizzes, much resembling that model for courtiers,—Lord Grizzle, in Tom Thumb. Mr. Penrhyn had a certain *faux air* of Sir Charles Grandison, which rather took my fancy; and young Clarence Delaval in the hussar dress of the Duke of Merioneth's yeomanry cavalry, was really perfect. Lady Alicia and Clarence would make a charming couple!

A more charming couple still were Sir Robert and Lady Mardynville,—so fussy about arriving in time, and having their names legibly written, and getting forward before their Majesties were too tired to distinguish them,

and being prominently noticed by every member of the Royal Family. I stood near them, after we had passed the Presence Chamber ; and they would not let me off a single bow. “ His Majesty observed to me, with the greatest condescension, ‘ Sir Robert, I am glad to see you ;’ and the Queen inquired, most affably, of Lady Mardynville, after our young people. The Duke of Cumberland, as you may have noticed, nodded to me as I passed him, — the Duke of Sussex bowed. The Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria smiled ; as much as to say, ‘ Ah ! Sir Robert and Lady Mardynville,’ and Princess Augusta inquired of her ladyship how long we had been in town. Princess Sophia, of Gloucester, treats us quite as friends ; Lady Mardynville has a private audience of her royal highness once or twice in the course of the season. In short, it is not every one who can boast of being received as *we* have been. There is some satisfaction in paying our respects to the royal family, when we know, that our absence would be noticed, and that our attendance is appreciated.”

For *my* part I was too much confused during my presentation to take much heed of what had occurred; not on account of the examination of the royal family, who exhibit the graciousness and indulgence of high-breeding; but because the malicious face of Lady Lancaster was prying from behind the Queen; while her son, who was in waiting, stared me out of countenance. His supercilious nonchalance was quite as insupportable as while enduring the martyrdom of the bad dinner in New Norfolk Street.

Having no claim to aspire to the hospitalities of the King and Queen, *I* have only to regard the drawing-room as one of the best parties in town; and though, of necessity, far from a select assemblage, comprehending more than any other the nobility and opulence of the kingdom. Many attend, out of respect for the throne; many more, out of respect to their own position in society; and the remainder, perhaps, to exhibit their diamond necklaces and state liveries.

I have often heard it asserted that an Eng-

lish girl, with the early bloom of girlishness on her cheek, is the prettiest creature in the world ; and have thence concluded that a drawing-room, where so many of these rosebuds are brought forward to exhibit their first expansion, must present a most interesting spectacle. This morning I particularly noticed the *demoiselles* to be presented ; and the ghastliness of the ladies of a certain age was scarcely less repulsive than the *niaiserie* of several of these budding beauties. Nothing but a young calf is so awkward as a girl fresh from the school-room, with the exhortations of the governess against forwardness and conceit still echoing in her ears ; knowing no one,—understanding nothing,—afraid to sit, to stand, to speak, to look,—always in a nervous ague of self-misgiving. The blushing, terrified, clumsy girls, I noticed yesterday, will soon refine into elegant women ; but what will then become of the delicacy of their complexion and the simplicity of their demeanour ?

I am not one of those who cannot dispense with the case-hardened air of fashion, which

strips the cheek of its blushes, and the eyelid of its downcast veiling. The *dureté* of expression produced by long exposure to the stare of society, the worldliness stamped upon the brow, are, to *me*, fearful indications ; and one of the charms which distinguishes my cousin, Lady Cecilia, from those of her caste, is a peculiar, whimsical, playful, *un-naïve naïveté*, incompatible with the defying air of what is called Fashion.

And what, after all, is called Fashion ? Ten thousand various things, by ten thousand various people ! Rank is positive, wealth positive ; but Fashion is an airy nothing, which obtains a name and local habitation, according to the fancy of the tribunal sitting in judgment. Provincial people, speaking of their county races, observe, “ We had all the *fashion* of the neighbourhood : the duchess and her daughters, Lord So and So and his sons ; ” evidently mistaking mere nobility for fashion. London people, of the second class, talk in the same strain, of “ having met Mrs. Bullion and Mrs. Omnium,” or other notabilities of the Bank-

stock aristocracy with quantities of their *fashionable* friends at Hastings or Brighton." While the world,—the peremptory world of the two thousand, applies the designation of fashion exclusively to that precarious and uncertain distinction which, for a moment, concentrates the favour of its caste upon certain things, or certain persons; individuals deficient in birth, fortune, morals, and understanding, have sometimes been eminently the fashion; and, as such, preferred before the great or good; have been invited everywhere, courted, caressed, till they attained an air of self-possession,—of satisfaction in themselves and the world,—conventionally termed an air of fashion.

Nothing, however, is so unaccountable as the generation and progress of this gaseous vapour! Like the malaria or the cholera, it rageth where it listeth; and whether infectious, or contagious, or spontaneous, or what not, no man can tell. It is as little to be commanded or controlled as the winds of heaven; and is more talked about, and as little understood, as political economy, or the metempsychosis.

A curious example was afforded me the other night, by Lady Cecilia, of the capricious nature of this butterfly goddess, whose frivolous worship seems to form the darling idolatry of London. Opposite to us, at the opera, but on a higher tier, is a small and inconvenient box, in which I have been accustomed to notice the comings and goings of all the "fashionable" men about town ; that is, the men of rank and fortune, distinguished, furthermore, by the ennobling touch of the tinsel wand. One crimson curtain of the box is always just sufficiently advanced to conceal the person seated behind its folds ; and, had it not been for the occasional extension of an arm with an exquisitely fitting white glove, beating time with a glittering fan, I might have been permitted to surmise, that a bishop, or a lord chancellor, enjoyed slily, in that recondite retreat, the terrestrial harmonies of Mozart or Rossini. But, its inmate thus proved to be a woman, I had only to conclude that she was one of those more sinning than sinned against, concerning whom questions must not be asked by lips polite.

Last Saturday, however, I was startled by Lady Cecilia's observation of, "Ah! Mrs. Crowhurst is in the duke's box, I see, which explains why her little boudoir of fashion, yonder, is deserted to-night."

"Mrs. Crowhurst?" said I; and, following the direction of her glass to the ducal box to which she alluded, I found it fixed upon a tall, fair, handsome, and strikingly "fashionable-looking" woman.

"How abominable of the duke, whose sisters and cousins are often seen in that box, to allow such a person to enter it!" I exclaimed, in a fit of virtuous indignation.

"Such a person?"

"Such a person as that Mrs. Crowhurst."

"My dear love, she is not *that* Mrs. Crowhurst; she is *the* Mrs. Crowhurst. What have you to urge against her?"

"Nothing! for, till this moment, I never heard her name; but I have always concluded——"

"Fie, fie! where have you lived, my dear, not to have heard of Mrs. Crowhurst?"

“ Seven years at Delaval Castle, and seventeen in a cottage in Staffordshire, since you oblige me to plead my cause,” said I, laughing. “ But, instead of deriding, pray, enlighten my ignorance.”

“ And you really *never* heard of Mrs. Crowhurst? *Vous êtes d'une ignorance crasse*, as the French say of those who know twice as much as themselves! Mrs. Crowhurst is, as you see, a handsome woman; she is, as the peerage will tell you, well born; and, as I can tell you, clever and agreeable. Yet, when she first descended upon this most capricious of cities, no one cared for her—she did not get on—she was not the fashion. Some thought her too tall, some too fair, some too lively, some too frivolous—all too something. Almack’s turned up its nose at her; and, under such contumelious treatment, most women, ejected from the highest sphere, would have taken to starring it in a lower. But the Crowhurst (let us do her justice!) had a taste for good society; and, after secretly analyzing the nature of the supercilious men and women by whom she was

judged unworthy notice, determined on a *coup d'état*. She made herself talked about, grew affected, lost her character, and—became the fashion! I, and other fools, immediately set about inquiring, ‘Who is this Mrs. Crowhurst, concerning whom there is such a scandal with Lord Alfred? Not the Mrs. Crowhurst I met down at Clackmannan Court?—Well! I had not the least idea there was any thing attractive in that woman!’—and so began to discover merits in her errors. By degrees she became the rage; nay, she is still the height of the fashion. But if all the world believed her, as I do, to be, in reality, well-conducted, it would be puzzled to assign any motive for her sudden popularity.”

“ You are giving me a terrible lesson,” said I, laughing. “ What a frightful road to fashionable favour!”

“ By no means! Your position and hers are essentially different. Were a breath of scandal to blow upon *you*, you were lost. *You*, free, independent, able to marry where you please, have no possible apology for indis-

cretion. Even flirting is forbidden to a widow. That which passes for flirtation in a girl of seventeen, becomes coquetry in a *belle veuve*; and, should she raise expectations which she afterwards refuses to gratify with her hand, she is termed, in plainest English, a jilt;—for *she* must have coquettled with *malice prepense*. You, my dear cousin, my dear *friend*, must take some wiser mode of becoming the fashion; luckily, you have only *l'embarras du choix*."

I was pleased by Cecilia's little lesson, for I saw she was in earnest. With all her *légèreté*, it would deeply grieve her, were *my* conduct to provoke a disparaging comment. Towards her niece, Lady Alicia, she maintains the same severity; and, in presence of our lovely young friend, is twice as guarded in every sentiment and expression as in conversing with others. Had she been blest with daughters of her own, I am persuaded they would have been admirably educated (*i. e.* for women of fashion!) It is a mistaken prejudice which decides a man against marriage with the daughter of one whose early years are supposed to have been years of error.

Such a woman is rigorous, above all others, in watchfulness over her child; whereas women like Lady Clackmannan, whose conduct through life has been irreproachable, and who have basked in the sunny side of society, are apt to fancy virtue a thing of descent, or matter of course, leaving it to be inculcated by the governess, with geography and the use of the globes.

— Interrupted by a tiresome morning visit! How could even a woman so misjudging as Lady Farrington imagine that, because, at Armine's desire, I sent her my card, I entertained any desire to listen to her most prosaic prose for three long quarters of an hour! For the first ten minutes of her visit, I was deceived into thinking her charming; for she talked only of my sister, and of my sister only with praise. “As dear Mrs. Herbert's nearest neighbour in the country, *she* had such opportunities of admiring her sweetness of temper, her depth of judgment, her softness of disposition! Mrs. Herbert was her standard of perfection. She knew not such a wife, such a mother, such a

mistress, such a friend. No one could properly estimate Mrs. Herbert but those who resided in her own neighbourhood, and saw her, young and pretty as she was, devote her time to clothe the hungry and feed the naked—(she begged my pardon, she meant clothe the naked and feed the hungry)—could do justice to her virtues. Nothing so unselfish, nothing so amiable as Mrs. Herbert!"

Must I not have had a heart of adamant to resist this well-merited eulogy of my dear sister? I began to discover that, if not an elegant, Lady Farrington was a warm-hearted, sensible woman. What mattered her over-fine gown and tawdry bonnet, since she knew how to render justice to Armine! But a falling off soon followed.

" She had so long wished to make my acquaintance! Mrs. Herbert had talked me over with her so often; she seemed to know me as well, and to be as *au fait* of my affairs, as if we had been friends from childhood. She knew, in fact, more of me than I could suppose." And, in uttering the hint, she as-

sumed a significant smile, which, were I less acquainted with my sister's delicacy, would have led me to suppose that Armine had really been betraying my confidences to a stranger !

But Lady Farrington soon disclosed herself. Perceiving how favourable an impression she had made by her rhapsodies concerning "dear Mrs. Herbert," she proceeded to panegyrize the husband with equal fervour. "She did not know what they should do in Bedfordshire without dear Mr. Herbert: Mr. Herbert was such a good neighbour, such an agreeable companion, such an active magistrate, such a sensible man;—such an excellent husband, such a kind father, such a valuable friend, such an indulgent landlord, such a liberal patron. Mr. Herbert had done wonders in improving the breed of cattle in his parish, and the roads in his district. But, above all, which was a great comfort to herself and Sir John, Mr. Herbert was of the right side in politics."

I longed to inquire the whereabout of the right side of a circle; but was apprehensive of doing or saying any thing to prolong her visit.

I had really no patience to hear my cross, arbitrary brother-in-law so overlauded. Luckily, she came prepared to eulogize all and sundry unto myself appertaining ; and, having now praised my sister, her husband, and children, my house, my furniture, and even Azim, who was dozing on the rug, she considered my very neighbours entitled to their share of commendation.

“ She had the pleasure of knowing the Gresham Ronshams ;—charming family,—so agreeable, so accomplished, so much people of the world ! Daughters pretty,—sons handsome,—parents highly intellectual. She had heard a great deal of me from the Gresham Ronshams.”

I assured her, as civilly as I could, that I had not the honour of their acquaintance.

“ No ! she was aware of that. But they heard me singing, through the wall, and heard my little dog bark, and often fancied they could even distinguish my voice. Then they saw me go out in the carriage (they were quite in love with my carriage !) and come home

on horseback (the girls thought my mare the handsomest in London). In short, they were extremely interested in all my pursuits!"

I had no time to retort upon my neighbours; for, just then, Mr. Penrhyn made his appearance; and I have no doubt Lady Farrington has by this time called upon the Herberts, to ascertain the name of the tall, dark gentleman, so very intimate with dear Mrs. Delaval, that even her lapdog jumps on his knees without invitation!

To-day, I have determined to dine and pass the evening at home, alone; for to-morrow I must be dressed by eleven o'clock, to be ready for Epsom; then return to dinner at Lady Clackmannan's; and at night, two balls! — What a laborious day of pleasure!

Ten o'clock. — Heigho! only four hours alone, and obliged to take to my journal for society! Intending to read away the evening, I fancied Ebers had amply provided me with the *de quoi*; but how few new books will bear being read in the midst of the excitements of

the season ! If grave, that which passed last night in the House, and was discussed this morning in the *Times*, is ten times more important ; — if light, all that I heard on Wednesday at Almack's, all that I saw this morning in the Park, ten times more amusing.

Since I came to town, several women have been shewn me in society as the *femmes auteurs* of the day ; and, with Edgeworth and Burney, De Stael, De Souza, and Cottin in my memory, I rashly sent for a whole library of their works. What an ocean of milk and water ! False sentiment, tawdry style, and a total absence of either sense or sensibility !

Even of the professional writers, how few possess the art of arresting attention, amid the tumults of the busy world, as Scott and Byron used to do, when I sat from midnight till day-dawn, engrossed by their last new works. I don't care about * * * *. Before I open his book, I know that it will be bright, pure, polished, correct ; but it is Carrara marble, employed in the manufacture of an elegant chimney-piece, not in the composition of a breathing

piece of sculpture. I don't care for * * *—his heroes are wooden, his stories lumbering; or for * * * * *, whose soul seems always star-seeking in the celestial spheres. Of living poets, Wordsworth, the inspired, writes no longer; Moore writes prose, and Campbell travels; and of travels, I have vowed a vow to read no more, till they come to be written by cherubim, having only heads and wings. A traveller with an appetite, is as great a nuisance as Dando; and Fanny Kemble's hot suppers are almost as bad as Mrs. Trollope's 'cuteness. India, by the way, is the only land really fortunate in its tourists,—Heber, Jacquemont, Mundy, Miss Roberts; while, as to poor America, since the conquest of Peru, no country was ever so barbarously harassed by foreigners. Were it not for a few biographies, and the little green-paper-covered commonsensical volumes of miscellanies, put forth in edification of the dunces of the rising generation, *we*, of the generation *risen*, should rarely find a new book to occupy our attention of an idle evening.

Now I am in process of commination, I must take leave to denounce a few things more. The little pictures, and little prints, and little poems, and little ballads of the day, are my utter abhorrence. A sickliness is beginning to degrade our taste in the arts, which cries aloud for reformation. All is namby-pamby, all Tilburina in white satin, all H *** B ** *, all Parris, all fiddle-faddle! Every artist, poet, painter, or musician, seizes some spun-sugar idea, wraps it up in snipped paper, with a pretty little motto, as a pretty *cadeau* for pretty little ladies. When shall we again erect our worship to the noble, the stern, the simple, the vast? When will savage Rosa dash, or learned Poussin draw? When will Haydn or Handel revive—a Vandyke impart meaning to the human face divine—a Goldsmith or an Inchbald cheat one of genuine tears—or a Hogarth preach upon canvass a moral worth a thousand homilies? So weary am I of the embroidered-cambric-handkerchief school, that the sight of a table covered with tabbyfied Annuals, is to me more nauseating than an apothecary's shop.

The Fine Arts, viewed through the wrong end of the telescope, can be made as *infiniment petits* as any thing else; and an eternal diamond edition of the human understanding wearies the mind, as much as the eyes. Ah! here is a volume of "Poems, by the Howitts," and I am secure of a pleasant and profitable hour.

May 25th.—Four days since I wrote a line; what infidelity to my Diary!—and now the pen is in my hands, I feel too idle and good-for-nothing to bid it speed. To exhilarate the spirits, amusement, like champagne, should be taken in moderate quantities: excess renders one stupid. Epsom,—balls,—two delightful dinners, and a *petit souper* at Merioneth House last night, after the opera; yet, to-day, to borrow the comparison of Beatrice, I am as dull as a great thaw. The truth is, that the society of Lady Clackmannan and her daughter is extremely wearying; the former, because she excites one too much,—the latter, too little. Lady Clackmannan is full of fire and intelligence; subdued, indeed, by the high breeding

of exclusivism ; but your attention is not kept the less painfully on the stretch, because her eloquence is couched in a voice as low in tone as one of Breguet's dumb repeaters ; nor does her glittering eye hold you less potently enthralled, because it is one that fixes only her intimates, and never wanders over the crowd. To pass a day with her is looking on a piece of intricate clock-work ; you feel sure that, while the automaton performs its functions with measure and deliberation, wheel within wheel, and flyer upon flyer, are labouring *prestissimo* within. As to Lady Alicia, her childish simplicity is a perpetual gathering of primroses—an insipid scentless flower, not worth stooping for !

I wonder who was the rather sallow-looking, silent, but certainly distinguished man, whom George Hanton brought with him to help us through our sandwiches at Epsom, and whom Lady Clackmannan appeared so anxious to engross ? While she engaged him in an eager conversation on *her* side the carriage, Hanton whispered to me, with a glance at our

small silver sandwich-box and bottle of sherry, “If one were not afraid to be seen in their society, there are people to be found at Epsom, who, instead of coming to see their bets decided, with a sandwich or two in the carriage, to avoid being *too* hungry for dinner, make a regular party of pleasure of the Derby, and bring down huge baskets from Gunter’s;—*pâtés de volaille* and iced champagne,—quite a *dîner de campagne*. To see them gormandizing in some of the carriages, you would suppose a famine at hand. I am convinced certain persons come to Epsom only to eat!”—And, having swallowed the remaining anchovy sandwich in the box, away went Mr. Hanton; and I actually saw him afterwards talking to the Ronsham Greshams, and devouring a plateful of tongue and chicken on the step of the family coach.

Epsom certainly presents a brilliant spectacle. Such an effusion of animal spirits in man and beast—such movement—such excitement! Every one eager to be the last seen in town, and the soonest on the course; run-

ning the seventeen miles as if it were a heat. Then so many pretty dresses — so many pretty women, combined with fresh air, sunshine, and the sudden outburst into the country from the thraldom of town, render the day of the Derby an universal fête. The money to be made, — the money to be lost, — not only on the event of the race, but by the use and abuse of horses and carriages, finery and feeding, sets all the world in motion. The widely spreading course, variegated with colours of every hue, — the sight of joyous faces, — the sound of

Ladies' laughter coming through the air ;

the freshness of the crushed grass,—the springiness of the whole scene,—fill one with cheerful thoughts. Above all, the rare assemblage of fine horses, which start with the fine gentlemen (placing the fine gentlemen, in sporting term, *second*), to meet the running horses at Tottenham Corner ! Altogether, what an air of prosperity, — what excess of luxury, — and what a contrast to the state of things

I have, of late years, been compelled to witness ! Yet, if the truth were told, there is six times as much spirit of enjoyment in the ragged regiment of spectators, gracing similar scenes, in Ireland ; and if they sometimes close in strife and disorder, it is that the contrast afforded by such rare occasions of diversion to the humiliations of daily life, proves too exciting for the reason of the unreasoning.

I wonder whether foreigners are as much impressed as I was by the *coup d'œil* of the Epsom course. No other occasion presents the English populace (aristocratic and plebeian) to their view, under so vivacious an aspect ; thrice vivacious to me, who, for so many years, have inhabited a half-populated district, and written myself down, an *ennuyée*.

It was odd enough, by the way, that Lady Clackmannan should not introduce to me her sallow friend ; for she has been kind enough to present me to her whole acquaintance. But this one man, whom, by her manner of addressing him, she evidently values, she keeps to herself. I saw him again,

for a moment, at Lady Bruce's ball, looking, as before, dry and discontented, though courted by all the finest of the fine ladies ; and he was opposite to me at supper at Merioneth House, where it was impossible to inquire his name, as he must have overheard the question. Lady Maria De Rawdon sat next him, flirting in her usual detestable style ; and I fancied he looked as disgusted with *her* as unconscious of me. Why should one feel offended when a stranger passes several hours in close propinquity, without honouring one with a smile, a word, or even a look ? Those were good old-fashioned times when people had an excuse for at least a civil gesture to their neighbours at table, in helping the dish before them, or inviting them to take wine.

Sir Jenison Delaval, who has just called, cannot assist my conjectures concerning Lady Clackmannan's sallow friend. He certainly *is* one of the stupidest and most unobservant men in Europe ! He asked me as many questions about the Derby as if he had not read a dozen different accounts of the race in the news-

papers ; whereas, *I* saw no more of the running, than if I had passed the day in the vaults of St. Faith's. We arrived late, got a bad place ; and I am not sportswoman enough to climb to a barouche-box, and grill myself an hour in the sun, for the enjoyment of so brief a pleasure. Mrs. Crowhurst, by the way, was seated, outshining Phœbus, on the highest box of a carriage, on the least prominent place of which I should have been sorry to be seen.

But this supper,—I cannot dismiss from my mind the supper at Merioneth House. The duke was in high spirits, and eminently agreeable ; my little crooked friend, Lady William Bately, gayer and more brilliant than I ever saw her, fully meriting her title of *La Lucciola* ; and every one in his best mood and temper, except the strange man. It is one of the happy privileges of persons so great as the Duke of M—, that they never see people out of humour, or flowers out of bloom. The gardener takes care that the plants exhibited in their conservatory shall be in fullest blossom ; and the guests who come to admire them, spread

their butterfly-wings, and display their brightest colours, that they may be invited, again and again, to adorn the favoured spot. It almost puts me out of patience, to hear people, like his grace, observe, when some woman is spoken of as capricious, or man as uncertain, “ Well, really, *I* think you are unjust ; I have known her many years, and have never experienced, from her, any thing the least like caprice”—or, “ Uncertain ? I have uniformly found him one of the most agreeable, obliging persons of my acquaintance ! ” Of *his* acquaintance, very probably ; but in society less imposing, the claws of pussy’s satin paws peep out.

By the way, I *did* observe a little betrayal of temper, even at Merioneth House, the other night. We have got a beautiful Piedmontese countess, a Madame di Campo Fiorito, lately arrived from the Continent ; exquisitely lovely, exquisitely fascinating, *et qui fait fureur*. All we know of her, at present, is, that she is high born and beautiful. Whether mischievous or not, no one can say ; and it is amusing to observe the misgivings excited, in certain circles,

by her *début*. The established beauties are, for the moment, thrown into the shade, more especially those on the shady side of noon ; for the Campo Fiorito, in her twenty-first year, is delicate of complexion as a blush-rose, and can presume to be singularly simple in her style of dress : no trimmings, no ornaments, no flowers, no jewels—nothing but a plain robe of rich materials—nothing but her fine dark hair. Rouge and frippery are sadly put to the blush by such a contrast. Half a dozen women, whom, last week, I thought charming, seem to have acquired a meretricious air since the countess's arrival. Many look ugly, many old,—all tawdry. *Is* such a rival to be pardoned ?

The panic is considerably augmented by general uncertainty as to her conduct and intentions. Is she a flirt, a coquette, or worse ? Impossible to guess. Some tremble for their lovers, some for their husbands, some for their sons. Lady This declares, that nothing is so great an interruption to society as the presence of a professed beauty. Lady That, who, for

years past, has been a professed beauty herself, has taken refuge, within the last week, in the pleasures of domestic life, parading in Kensington Gardens, with a group of her interesting children. Lady Clackmannan, who cannot forgive her for having eclipsed Lady Alicia, says, she has a melodramatic air. Lady Cecilia, who attempts the *bel esprit*, when defeated as a *belle*, says, she is a magnificent automaton, well wound up; while others protest, she is admirably got up as a “Keepsake” heroine.

This supper at Merioneth House was, I suspect, given in her honour. The duke, who likes every thing beautiful or clever, is prepossessed in her favour, and wishes to place her on a good footing with her rivals. But not a charmer of them all was to be conciliated. Instead of exerting themselves to overpower the enemy, they sulked, and threw the game into her hands. Some, eager to seem unconscious of her presence, contrived only to look supercilious; others talked *at* her, and, consequently, flippantly and affectedly; while several had a bad headach (the *migraine* of an angry French-

woman) and could not, or would not, open their lips. I fancy even the good-natured duke might have admitted, on *this* occasion, that he had seen certain of his fair friends out of humour. I observed Lady Clackmannan inquire, of her nameless neighbour, as we rose from table, what *he* thought of the countess; to which he replied, with an air of indifference, that he had known her, some years ago, at Genoa.

“ Apparently you do *not* admire her so much as the rest of the world?” persisted Lady C.

“ On the contrary,” he replied, “ I have long considered her the most beautiful woman of my acquaintance; but I am not easily infatuated by a woman merely beautiful.”

It is curious enough, that, with all our proverbial coldness, no people are subject to such fever-fits of enthusiasm as the English,—fever-fits much resembling the boiling-springs among the snows of Hecla. When we *do* run mad, it is very mad indeed. But our *engouemens* are, for the most part, imitative. If we do not

invent fashions, we readily adopt them ; and seldom throw up our caps in honour of an artist, till his fame is buoyed over the channel, upon the applauses of the whole Continent. Taglioni, Sontag, Paganini, Heberle, were worshipped in London, *not* as the most accomplished performers of their time, but as the idols of Paris, Berlin, and Naples ; and we should have cared little, perhaps, for the charms of the Contessa di Campo-Fiorito, had it not been for a puff-preliminary, which appeared, accidentally, in the *Morning Post*, the day she first appeared at Almack's, giving an account of a fatal duel fought in honour of her *beaux yeux*, last season, at Florence.

This morning I have had the happiness of a visit from a very dear friend, Lady Southam, who is come to town to take her turn as lady-in-waiting ; still the same kind, amiable, straightforward person as when, as Lord Randall's daughter, she used to lecture Armine and myself, in Staffordshire, in the tone of an elder sister, ten years ago. Never was any woman so little calculated for a life of court-

iership. Absent, indolent, careless of appearances, the pomps and vanities of life are, to *her*, absolutely incumbering; and when I ventured to ask her, in all the frankness of our boudoir *tête-à-tête*, whether she regretted her appointment, she candidly answered in the affirmative.

“ Nothing can be more amiable,” said she, “ than those I have the honour to serve; nothing lighter than the duties I am required to perform. As far as regards Windsor or St. James’s, I have not a complaint to make. But my position in the world is altered for the worse. People attribute to me an influence I do not possess; and which, if I possessed, Lord Southam would never wish to see me exercise. They ask of me the most unreasonable things. People, with whom I have the slightest possible acquaintance, write to me to procure them invitations, places, preferment, and favours of every sort and description. My life is a perpetual ‘ No! ’—or, rather, a perpetual study of the art of implying a negative without offence. While others of my brother and sister-

hood are trying to magnify their importance in the eyes of the world, *my* chief business is to be thought twice as little as they choose to suppose me."

"I can conceive," said I, "that your pride will not allow you to be a frequent petitioner; still, you must have many opportunities of obliging, without compromising your own dignity."

"Less than you would suppose; and quite as little inclination to profit by them. My comfort in society is destroyed by an unavowed dread, that prevails, of my espionage. In mentioning some trivial fact, people take the liberty of entreating me not to repeat it; which, being interpreted, means, 'Pray, don't tell the queen;' whom I should just as soon think of accosting with a recital of such trash as mentioning it in my prayers. Even my friends exchange significant looks in my presence, as much as to say, 'Take care—you forget whom you have here—you are getting yourselves into a scrape;' and last winter, Lady Emily Sunderland actually taxed me with having acquainted

her majesty that Mr. Sunderland had a stall at the Opera;—a fact which, as the queen disapproves of dissipation in the clergy, was supposed to have kept them away from the Pavilion balls."

So much for the delicate distresses of a lady-in-waiting! I must now occupy myself with mine. Having a new dress to order for Lady Sittingbourne's breakfast, to which Herbert has consented that dear Armine shall accompany me, I shall choose for her a bonnet and pelisse exactly like my own.

What a diverting morning have I derived from my campaign among the milliners! This breakfast, it seems, has set all the *beau-monde* vanity-mad. It is the first of the season; and one would think our illustrious beauties had never before enjoyed an occasion of displaying their roses, lilies, and blonde or Brussels veils, on a green lawn. All the juveniles, I observe, are enchanted with the prospect of a breakfast; while those a little on the wane, who dread the exposition of the coming crowsfoot and first

gray hair, are trying to creep out of the engagement.

“ For my part, I detest sunshine dissipation,” drawled Lady Evelyn Beresford, whom I met at Devy’s, languishing over a *chapeau paille de riz*, most appropriately trimmed with *belles de nuit*; while the rubicund Mrs. Gresham Ronsham, in a pale pink hat and feathers, stood smiling at herself, like Malvolio, in Devy’s looking-glass, the attendant handmaidens protesting that she was “ *ravissante—faite à peindre!* ” Away she went in the family coach, hat and bandbox on her knee, lest any more favourite customer should induce Madame D. to play the traitress, and make over, to a less deserving aspirant, her *chapeau de Longchamps*!

I sometimes fancy that a spirit of malicious perversity instigates the councils of the *modiste* tribe. They seem to take delight in suggesting primrose or blush colour to the coarse and ruddy, *cerise* and *coquelicot* to the red-haired, and green or blue to the sallow and insipid. Of a certainty they have some cause for

guignon against their customers! How often do we see handsome, well-mannered girls, who would themselves so well become the wares they are fated to manufacture, stand, hour after hour, in a close show-room, exposed to the most harassing impertinence, the most perplexing caprices! The fine lady, who fancies the destinies of mankind dependent upon the folds of her silver turban, commands and countermands, wrangles, disputes, revokes, and changes her mind, thirty times in half as many minutes; till the poor, tired victim of her arrogance at length inscribes in the tablets of her brain a feather falling to the right for a feather falling to the left; and on the morrow, Lady Theodolinda returns, the detested turban in her hand, and the offender is summoned before a court millinerial, to be broke or reprimanded. Her ladyship threatens to withdraw her custom and patronage, unless justice is done upon the stupid young person who thought proper to take her orders; and floods of tears are drawn down the fair cheeks of the poor apprentice, who has an aged mother

dependent for bread upon her salary, because Lord Charles happened to pass Lady Theodolinda in the crush-room without notice, owing (as she supposes) to the frightful fall of that detestable feather.

“The great ladies have much to answer for, madam, for their conduct towards us,” said a good sort of motherly mantua-maker, with whom I once conversed on the subject. “They come to us persisting that they have not a gown to wear, that they shall be obliged to stay away from some dinner or ball, unless we send home a dress by a particular day and hour; and the poor overtasked young women in my employ are, consequently, obliged to sit up another night, in addition to the ten or twelve they have been passing without rest — pale, wan, exhausted, and in danger of falling into consumption, for want of air, exercise, and sleep. But, when the dress is taken home, the first thing that strikes the eye of the heartsick apprentice, in the lady’s dressing-room, is a choice of half a dozen gowns, silk, satin, lace, blue, pink, and white, laid out for selection;

many of them never worn. It is enough, madam, to make liars of our young people, when they find themselves so falsely dealt with. Again," she resumed, finding me give ear to her accusations, "what a lesson for a simple-hearted young girl, such as the greater number of those apprenticed to me by respectable parents,—farmers or tradesmen,—to be introduced into the dressing-room of a fine lady, and pass half an hour waiting there, with the confidential maid! Such discreditable secrets as she is likely to hear, such discreditable secrets to see!—cosmetics, washes, paints; beautifications for the hair, teeth, eyebrows, complexion; false ringlets, false braids, false pads for every part of the figure! And, from this abode of deceit and extravagance, strewed with billet-doux and unpaid bills, I expect her to come home pure and uncorrupted, to be industrious, frugal, and, above all, willing to forget her possession of those attractions which she has seen thus disgracefully counterfeited by one, who happens to be born in a more prosperous condition of life

than her own. Believe me, madam, a sad example is shewn by our great ladies!"

I fear I did not bear this lecture in mind, when I proceeded on my bonnet-hunt this morning, but it was forcibly recalled to me at Howell and James's, where Lady Christina R——, whom I never saw by day-light, except half-hidden in her *vis à vis*, with her face surrounded by blonde, was trying on a hat. As she turned to recover her bonnet from the table behind her, her face was fully revealed by broad day from the sky-light; and the coating of rouge and pearl-powder was disgusting. The white lead looked blue; and the eyes, glazed with dissipation, seemed the only vital portion of the face. What a lesson! what a degradation of the sex!

Nothing can be simpler than the dresses I have chosen for my sister and myself. Herbert will have no excuse for renewing his frequent charge against me of looking like La Reine de Golconde.

Clarence Delaval honoured me, last night, by a confidence of his passion for his cousin

Alicia, with which I could have well dispensed ; for I can be of no service to the young people, and shall greatly offend the old ones by even wishing them well. Clarence's prospects, poor fellow, are far from brilliant. Sir Jenison Delaval, who, being a valetudinarian, will water-gruelize himself to the age of eighty, having only four thousand a year, can make no great settlement on his son ; and though Clarence is next heir to Delaval Castle and the Irish property, I have no desire that my good brother-in-law should make way for him. Lady Alicia has been brought up as delicately and luxuriously as becomes the only daughter of the house of Clackmannan, and is just fit to live in the heart of a rose, and be nourished on its perfume. It will not do ! I shall persuade Lady Cecilia to send Clarence off to the Continent as soon as possible.

This hurry-skurry of dissipation makes one very good-for-nothing ! Not a day nor an hour can I make my own, to devote to any useful purpose. All the world is talking of a wonderful speech on the poor laws, made by a

wonderful Lord Hartston ; yet *I* have not been able to read a line of it. I must have met this Lord Hartston, for I have frequently heard his name pronounced in society ; but I cannot bring him to my recollection, unless it be a heavy doughy-looking man I found sitting one morning with Cecilia, clattering unintelligible political economy like a word-mill. I must read his speech, however, which not to be able to discuss, argues oneself a dunce.

It is surprising in how short a time the prevailing topic spreads from one end of London to the other ; no influenza half so epidemic. The clubs, I fancy, are the great dispensers of gossip contagions ; but every day brings forth its tale of wonder—political, literary, theatrical, scandalous, or fashionable ; which, between the hours of six and eight, is discussed with fish and soup, and more or less of prose, in every house of credit and renown, from Hyde Park Corner to Russell Square. As to Lord Hartston's speech, he and his oratory have afforded a text for the last two

days, for as much discussion as would fill the Bodleian library. If the man be in earnest, I honour him ; but so many of these *soi-disant* philanthropists select a subject *ad captandum*, that I must read, mark, and learn, before I give full faith to his honesty of purpose.

To-night we are to have the new opera ; and I have promised Lady Cecilia to be there, for the first *coup d'archet*. She is so much more susceptible than myself to the charms of music, that I have no right to disturb her ecstacies, by the opening and shutting of a door. My fair cousin's nerves are wonderfully excitable. Reared in the lap of luxury, as the spoiled pet of a fine lady, in a perfumed and overheated atmosphere, she acquired a morbid sensibility of heart and head, which her after-life was not fated to counteract. Excepting during the months passed with me at Delaval Castle, Lady Cecilia has never indulged in any but the most enervating habits ; till, at last, even her love of the arts has become almost an hysterical passion. She has wrought herself up, for instance, to such a pitch of enthusiasm, concerning this

new opera, that I have no doubt she will be obliged to tranquillize herself with æther; and I shall find her, to-night, salts-bottle in hand, her soul ready to be wafted upon a jig to heaven!

For my part, having been a diligent auditrress at the last three rehearsals, my ardour is somewhat damped. What a *mania* for attending rehearsals prevails just now in London! People seem to find strange delight in stumbling their way through dark, dusty passages into a darker, dustier box, which, by daylight, smells (like a pew at evening service in a damp country church) of serge curtains and straw matting, in order to hear a blundering orchestra tapped to order by a cross leader, or stormed into tune by a fiery *prima donna*; to admire la Grisi in her bonnet and pelisse, or Rubini piping his *falsetto*, with his beaver not *up*, but *on*. *Pour moi, je n'aime pas qu'on me désillusionne!* I could never weep again at Malibran's Desdemona, had I seen her rehearse it in a chintz gown, with the *primo violino* out of tune, or out of sorts.

Are not the French mistaken in their notion, that the English are *peu impressionables*? Have we not, on the contrary, of late years, borrowed their ready excitability? I arrived, last night, before the first stroke of the overture; yet every box was full: pit, gallery, pigeon-holes teeming with eager faces; nay, the very wanderers of the lobbies brought to a stand-still, by a general compression: every inch of standing-room occupied. Such a “hush,” too, as preceded the preparatory flourish of the leader’s bow; a “sh,” as with the hissing of all the serpents of Tartarus! Not a fan to be seen moving in the house; scarcely an eyebrow allowed to blink. I felt quite awestruck by the responsibility of the composer to such an audience; and was absolutely relieved by the thundering applauses that followed a spirited and characteristic overture. Before the close of the first act, of which no fewer than four *morceaux* were encored, I began to be almost as nervous as Lady Cecilia; not from the effect of the music, but from the effect of the music on the audience. When I saw the

cheeks of others flushed with rapture, their eyes sparkling with delight, their hands bearing involuntary testimony to the emotion of their ecstasified feelings, I seemed to tremble at my own insensibility. These people evidently heard something in the tones of Grisi, which *I* wanted sense to hear ; and the more moving incidents of the second act, which, being familiar to *me*, I managed to contemplate with tearless eyes, drew floods from those around me ; ay, even “iron tears down Pluto’s cheek,” by moistening the rouge of the dowager Duchess of Plymouth. Lady Cecilia was ashamed of my hardness of heart. She, poor soul, wept, and shuddered, and applauded ; and right glad was *I* of the excuse of going home to dress for a ball, to escape the rhodomontade of criticism, which *I* knew would be poured forth by the visitors to our box, on the falling of the curtain.

Leaving the *fanatici per la musica* to weep away their harmonious agony, I hastened to my toilet, and arrived at Lady Buntingford’s, fresh and composed, just as the first *contredanse* commenced ; when, to my amazement, I found

numbers of those I had left at the opera, over-powered with emotion, smiling, flirting, chatting, *en-avant-deuxing*, without a trace of tears, or aromatic vinegar ; their trimmings and white gloves a little soiled, perhaps, by contact with the King's Theatre, but every other impression wholly evaporated. The ball was a pleasant one to *me*, for met Armine and her husband ; and, though sadly sneered at by Herbert, for the coquetry of having altered my dress after the opera, I found him, on the whole, more agreeable than usual. Before two o'clock, however, they disappeared ; but I, being engaged to Lord Lancaster for a waltz, had courage to remain, and defy my brother-in-law's caustic comments on the want of dignity of those who wear a ball threadbare. In one of the pauses of the waltz, I discovered, among the bystanders, Lady Clackmannan's saturnine friend, looking scornfully upon our proceedings. Had I been dancing with any one but Lancaster, I should have inquired the name of the mysterious Mephistophiles. But I did not choose to appear interested by the mere appearance of

any young man ; nor would I provoke Lord Lancaster's irony by my ignorance, if, as I imagine, my sallow despiser is one known to all the world but myself. There was something in the contemptuousness of his air as he stood considering my partner and myself, which my feminine spirit seemed roused to defy ; and when, on the conclusion of the waltz, Lord Lancaster tried to engage me for the cotillon, for the first time in my life I complied. The cotillon is a dance which, in my conscience, I detest. Danced with spirit, it is a romping, unladylike exhibition ; danced with tameness, it is only vulgar and stupid,—the ordeal of a chaperon's patience, and a lover's magnanimity. I have, therefore, studiously avoided it ; and ill-natured as it may seem, I form a disadvantageous opinion of the manners of girls, and the wisdom of their mammas, who are habitual stayers-out of a ball, and dancers of the cotillon. A widow, in such a position as mine, is, I am sure, one of the last persons to be involved in any such diversion ; yet I was actually sneered into standing up at Lady Buntingford's ball.

I was glad when several exclamations of “ Ha, Mrs. Delaval! this is the first time I ever saw you dance the cotillon! *mieux vaut tard que jamais!*” bore witness to my innocence; but they rendered me only the more conscious of the folly I was committing, and, consequently, as awkward as I was uneasy.

Still my tormentor kept his ground. During the first three figures, *there* he stood,—his tall dignified person overlooking the circle,—about as stern, cold, and solemn, as Stonehenge; nor was it till some of the romping figures commenced, and he saw me commence my round of impertinence with a crimson satin cushion in my hand, that his disgust reached the climax, and he stalked away. I could have cried to think what an idiot I was making of myself; but apprehension of the world’s dread laugh, combined with that of my supercilious partner, kept me in order.

After all these vicissitudes, the pleasures of my day and night concluded with a tremendous nightmare; born, I believe, of unripe pineapple and indifferent champagne; or, perhaps,

who knows? an indifferent conscience. I dreamed a dream which, alas! needed no interpretation. I fancied I was crossing, on a crazy raft, a small lake that lies on the Ballyshumna estate; till by degrees the sheet of water narrowed and narrowed into a foetid marshy ditch, on the banks of which stood a succession of horrid hovels, such as I have too often seen in the original; from which proceeded howlings and shriekings, as for a wake over the dead. So narrow was the ditch, that, every moment, the raft seemed to jar and wedge itself into the bank, when hundreds of noxious reptiles were startled from their hiding-places, and crawled for refuge into the water. At last, out of all patience with my self-impelled steerage, I tried to climb the slimy, slippery bank, and managed to make my way to one of the most dilapidated cabins; from the mouldering walls of which, repulsive sounds and smells were perceptible. Nevertheless, the evil genius of my dream compelled me to enter; and *there*, stretched under horsecloths, round the naked chamber, lay men, women, and children, purple with the

typhus ; and in the midst, extended on the un-hinged door of the hovel, the corpse of a young woman, already—but no ! my pen cannot record such a combination of horrors !

At length I seemed to take courage, and tried to silence the howlings and lamentations around me ; when suddenly the figure of Lady Clackmannan's strange man, attired in long black garments, stood by my side, accosting me in the harshest tones and terms.

“ Why do you reprehend these people ? ” he seemed to say. “ It is for *you* they are suffering ! It is to furnish plenty to your table that *they* are famishing ! The leavings of your lap-dog would be dainties to sustain the strength of this dying family ! Do the cries of their anguish offend your delicate ears ? *They* are tormented to afford you the means of languishing in an opera-box ! Do the exhalations of this den of wretchedness oppress you ? Where would you find guineas to buy bouquets for your footmen, were not these outcasts taxed to supply your jointure ? Woman ! woman ! — A heavy account shall be demanded of you for this thing ! ”

You shall answer before the Most High God for the sufferings of these nursing mothers,— of these young children ; and repay in sack-cloth and ashes your profligate levity !”

Having roused myself at last with a painful gasp from this overpowering dream, I could not help exclaiming with Lear,

“ Oh ! I have ta'en too little care of this !”

I have written, this morning, to William Delaval, inclosing an order on my banker for the benefit of the poor on his estate ; for though I know him to be a liberal landlord, yet I, who draw so handsome a provision from the property, ought to take my share in ministering to the necessities of its population.

We have all written and repeated till we are tired, that “ dreams are the interludes of a busy fancy ;” but are they not haply something more ? Do they not infer a benignant and protecting presence, influencing with terrors, or soothing with compassion ? Be it indigestion, be it spiritual guardianship, I am the better for my nightmare of last night. It has given me

food for meditation, not e'en to madness, but e'en to repentance.

Seven o'clock.—Just returned from my ride in the park, out of spirits, or out of temper. It is becoming too hot to ride before dinner; but one's hours and habits in London are too dependent on the whims of others, to admit of anything so rational as an early dinner, and a ride afterwards. To-morrow, however, I promise myself an early dinner. For the first time I am engaged to encounter the polite suffocation of the ventilator. There is to be an interesting debate; and some good speaking is expected.

Will those tiresome Mardynvilles ever let me alone? They have sent me a card for another dinner; and the Duke of Merioneth told me to-day, in the park, that they stopped their carriage to invite him (for they go out airing together like the king and queen of Brentford), on the plea of, “to meet Mrs. Delaval.” Taken by surprise, he accepted; but I have already sent my excuse. What a mania

with some people is the pride of improving their acquaintance ; or, properly speaking, adding names to their visiting list. The whole business of their life seems to consist, as in a game at commerce, in making up a hand of blazes ! Season after season, they toil to convert esquires into baronets, baronets into lords, lords into viscounts, earls into marquesses, or dukes ! For peers, like crotchetts, have their comparative value ; and, as one semibreve is worth thirty-two demi-semiquavers, one duke covers at least a dozen baronets. I am constantly hearing it remarked, “ How wonderfully the Mardynvilles have got on ! ” — a phrase which, being interpreted, strictly means, “ What a wonderful number of their old acquaintance they have been enabled to cut ! ”

Three o’Clock, Saturday Morning. — How singular an adventure ; how stupid and unob-servant I must have been ! But here on paper, at least, let me collect my scattered thoughts, and *commencer par le commencement*.

I was chaperoned in my political début by no less a person than the far-famed Miss Ran-

dall, the bluest of blues, and most busy of busy-bodies, who scarcely misses a night in the ventilator throughout the session. She has her favourite nook, which no one but some miserable novice would think of usurping ; and the volumes of impure air she must have imbibed since politics came into fashion, sufficiently account for the pallor of her face, and the ardour of its predominating feature. No “blue” had ever so red a nose, or so yellow a complexion. With Miss Randall, accordingly, I ascended into the mysterious lantern, whence we were to bend our ears to the eloquence of the House : and I had the vexation to find that we were late. Every corner was already filled with ladies as inquisitive as myself, with the exception of Miss Randall’s accustomed seat, and one (in the adjoining compartment of which was a shabby-looking person in a black bonnet and cloak) on which lay a handkerchief, as if to mark that it was taken. As I paused opposite, however, the person in the cloak civilly removed the handkerchief, and stiffly informed me I was at liberty to occupy the place. I

would willingly have refused, not being inclined to settle in such close quarters with a neighbour so little distinguished; but, having no choice but to accept or lose my last chance, I niched myself in, and gave my attention to the business of the scene below. A very small portion of the House was discernible from my peephole; but I was fortunate that it happened to include one of the ablest of the Tory speakers, who rose shortly after we entered the ventilator.

It was my first opportunity (with the exception of an unimportant occasion at the Dublin University) of witnessing public oratory of any description; and I own my impression was that of disappointment. Accustomed to connect such magnificent results with the eloquence of the House of Commons, and to peruse such laboured but fluent specimens of parliamentary speaking, I was quite startled by the poverty, the rawness, the insignificance, of the reality. Of the three first members it was my luck to hear, the manner was so detestable that the matter hardly reached my comprehension; and

even in one pointed out by Fame and the cheers of the House as a most valuable member, I was shocked by the schoolboy awkwardness, the false emphasis, and vulgar action, disfiguring what I might have perused in the *Standard* as an impressive and convincing piece of argument. Nevertheless, hearing murmurs of rapture arise from many corners of the ventilator, I found that I had only to blame my want of discernment ; and that the humming, ha-ing, and see-sawing, which so much offended me, were an habitual portion of the mere delivery of one whose opinions obtain influential weight in the country. Ashamed of my weak prejudices, I fell into a reverie, which not even the boisterous applauses, following the concluding period of the honourable gentleman's oration, served to divert. I was far away in the days and haunts of my youth ; when my dear, good aunt Margaret, grown blind and curious, used to make Armine or myself read aloud the debates, as we sat, of a summer's morning, in our old hornbeam arbour, overlooking the silver Trent, or, of a

winter's evening, by the fireside, interrupting some prosy speech to ask her questions of Pitt and Fox, Wyndham and Horner; till I was brought to fancy, that

“The applause of listening senates to command,”

was an accomplishment worthy of a demigod. I used to envy Grattan's daughters; and wish — not that Heaven had made me such another man, — no! nor even the wife of such another man (girls are always consequential in their bib-and-tucker ambitions) — but his *mother*, — a Cornelia, a Volumnia, a Mrs. Sheridan, senior, or a venerable Countess of Chatham!

These defeated projects of maternal aggrandisement were passing through my brain, and producing a smile upon my face, when I was recalled to myself by the intense stillness of all below and around me, and the clear enunciation of the new speaker, whose eloquence commanded such breathless attention. Leaning eagerly over my ledge, I tried in vain to discover from which side of the House the voice proceeded. The speaker was completely

concealed from me by the gallery ; and, overcoming my natural reserve, I hazarded an inquiry of my neighbour concerning the name of the gentleman on his legs. An unceremonious “ Hush ! ” silenced my inquiry ; and I could scarcely forgive myself for having provoked such a rebuke from such a person. My ire was soon appeased, and my attention otherwise engrossed ; for very few minutes served to convince me that *now*, indeed, I was listening to an orator, — an orator after my own heart, an enlightened patriot, such as, twenty years ago, I was ambitious to boast as my son. What fervour, what conviction, bringing power in every sentence ; the voice of a man’s heart overmastering the hearts of men ; for it advocated the claims of the lowly, yet obtained favour in the ears of the great ! An hour, — two hours, did he speak on, invariably great, invariably convincing ; abounding in matter of fact, yet high-toned, and replete with moral dignity, where the more artificial aids of oratory were admissible. I began at last to dread the fulness of his exposition, and wished not to be

too fully convinced, lest the purpose of the speaker should be accomplished; and when the cheers of the House proclaimed the conclusion of the oration, I drew a long breath, disappointed that all had been said. My mind was completely subjugated by a power of which I never dreamed before.

“What think you of *that*?” whispered Miss Randall, coming round to me, as all were hushing down their ejaculations, in order to do justice to the honourable but unfortunate member, the business of whose “prattle” it was to be “tedious” in reply.

“Splendid!” said I, wishing to concentrate my encomiums into the least possible offence to the new speaker.

“Was not that worth coming to hear? was not *that* the finest speech you ever heard in your life? Eloquent, manly, fluent, harmonious, philanthropic, philosophical;” and she proceeded to string epithet upon epithet, in a style to have provoked the laughter of a mute at a funeral. Now, even Napoleon the Great used to admit, that nothing chilled him so

much as the false enthusiasm of others; *I*, the little, may confess, that her rhapsodies froze the praises ready to burst forth from my lips.

“Yes,” said *I*, coolly, “a very good speech.”

“*Good?* — You mean divine, luminous, astounding!”

“I mean a very able speech and speaker. Who was it?”

“*Who?*” — You cannot be in earnest! — There is but one such orator in the House, but one such orator in England, but one such in Europe, but one such in the world! — Cicero, Demosthenes, Mirabeau.”

“And his name?” I interrupted, dreading the explosion of her verbosity.

“His *name?* His name is Lord Hartston! But, my dear Mrs. Delaval, you must be jesting! You were as well aware of this all the time, as —”

“May I venture to remind you, that many here are listening to the debate?” drily observed the elderly lady in the cloak, apparently impatient of my garrulous friend’s interrup-

tion ; and away flounced Miss Randall to her seat, muttering—“ insolent, ridiculous, contemptible, under-bred,” &c. &c.

Nevertheless, the speaker on his legs was fully deserving attention. As a piece of casuistry, I have rarely heard any thing more curious than his reply ; or more striking than his art of breaking through a few weak points of his adversary’s fence, without seeming to attack them. Nevertheless, all his art, which was considerable, did not succeed in the main object, of involving in ridicule the philanthropic projects of the patriot.

At the close of the reply, the debate was adjourned : and I waited only the announcement of my carriage, which Clarence Delaval, who was in the gallery, had promised to send up. Half-a-dozen dandies had already made their way to the ventilator, and were whispering in its divers nooks, when the old lady, who had been seated opposite me, suddenly addressed a young man, whom I recognized as Lady Clackmannan’s long-chinned friend, with, “ Very well, Eustace—I am satisfied.”

“Eustace” seemed satisfied, too; for he extended his hand, and cordially accepted a shake of hers; and away they hobbled down-stairs together. I could not help fancying there was a degree of affectation in his avoidance of even a glance at *me*; but I was glad at last to have become acquainted with the monster’s name; and “Mr. Eustace” was thenceforward to be inscribed in the tablets of my memory among my favourite aversions.

But, as we were returning home, the Randall suddenly exclaimed, “What did you think of Lord Hartston?”

“I told you before, that he was a very able speaker.”

“I know. But *himself*—what did you think of *him*? ”

“From the place I occupied, I could not even catch a glimpse of him.”

“Pho, pho! The place you occupied was exactly the one where he was to be seen. That old monster in the cloak was his mother, the only woman in the world, I fancy, to whom he shews the slightest attention. Had

I known it, I would have been more civil to her. When he came into the ventilator, and all the women about me were bustling up to get a sight of him, I had a great mind to go and make her an apology, as an excuse for getting a full view of Lord Hartston."

Inwardly congratulating myself that she had amended her intentions, I now fell into an uneasy state of cogitation on all that had passed. I could scarcely recollect what I had said of Lord Hartston's speech in his mother's hearing.

Saturday.—To-day, I dined with the Herberts, quietly, we three alone; for I took courage seriously to protest against Herbert's unkindness, in involving me in his state dinner parties. As soon as the servants were out of the room, I related to them my tale of mystery, beginning with my first impression of dislike toward Lord Hartston, and ending with my glow of enthusiasm in favour of his speech.

"I knew the history before," said Herbert, coldly, "with the exception of your cold and

hot fit; and I suppose no one is entitled to interpret the eternalague of a lady's temperament, but the incubus appointed to preside over it."

" You can have known nothing at all about the matter," said I, angrily; " for I have never mentioned the subject, even to my sister."

" Perhaps not. It was Lord Hartston who mentioned it to me; one of the dearest friends I have on earth. He was rather inclined to admire you, Harriet. He had heard wonders of you from *us*. But Hartston is, as he has a right to be, difficult. Nothing can exceed his horror of the flirting, frivolous women of the day. It is not for such men as Hartston to run a race with your Lord Lancasters, or your Mr. Penrhyns; and the moment he saw you given over to dandies and milliners, he renounced all thoughts of you. Lucky enough, as you find him so ugly and disagreeable."

" Yes, very lucky," said I, more and more annoyed by all I was hearing: " but Lord Hartston is the first man I have happened to

meet who has tried to sneer me into an affection for him."

"I don't suppose he troubled his head much about the matter," said Herbert, in his usual disagreeable tone. And Armine, perceiving me to be annoyed, turned the conversation into a different channel.

Lord Hartston then, the great orator,—or, more truly, the distinguished patriot,—is the man whose proceedings have so much annoyed me! And now, doubtless, the old lady, whose countenance struck me as so forbidding, will take care to acquaint him with the impertinent interruption she bore with during the debate, and the levity that offended her. After all, what signifies to me the opinion of either mother or son? I perfectly remember having heard from Armine that Hartston Abbey was within visiting distance of them in Bedfordshire, and that Lord Hartston had been the college friend of Herbert. I dare say he is just such a dry, disagreeable person as my brother-in-law!

—What a delicious day! How auspicious for

our breakfast! Mild, balmy, a little clouded—not too much sun, not too much air, not too much any thing. The precise *beau moment* for a *déjeuner* is past: the moment of lilacs, laburnums, and Gueldres roses. But the acacias are in flower, and the roses peeping out; and roses and acacias are enough for any moderate woman. The American plants, too, are at their brightest; and Lady Sittingbourne's garden is a sheet of rhododendrons and kalmias. I like the thoughts of a breakfast, and of being accompanied by my brother and sister. This is the first time the Herberts have been out with me since I came to town.

After nearly twelve hours' pleasure, thoroughly knocked up! Why will people so grievously overdo their diversions? It would have been really pleasant to get away from the glare and dust of London for a few hours, to sit under green trees and enjoy the fragrance of the gardens, and the freshness of the river, with, perhaps, a hundred persons scattered through the grounds; and at seven, a cold dinner, with plenty of iced champagne,—and

back to town again. But all these tents, marques, wreaths of artificial flowers, and variegated lamps, prepared for midnight, but scenting the air most abominably at mid-day,— all these wooden platforms for musicians and dancing, tumbling, and equestrian exercises,— are any thing but accessory to rural pleasures. Five hundred persons, crammed into the space of five acres, encumbered with bowers, trellises, kiosks, and temples,— all eager after novelty, and running here, and hurrying there, to listen to Russian bands, or stare at Indian jugglers,— would ruin even the Garden of Eden ; and then, to crowd away from the roses and green lawn into a stifling tent, to eat turtle and venison, and drink Madeira and lime-punch, is the climax of every thing disagreeable. The men, however, seemed to find much satisfaction in their *patés* and *galantines* ; and even Herbert got into such good-humour after some excellent hock, that, in the course of the evening, he insisted upon dancing with me. The gardens looked lovely, illuminated with glow-worm lamps ; but I should have liked it better had

the lawn smelt less of Roman punch and ham-sandwiches.

I never saw a larger assemblage of pretty women. But they struck me generally as being over-dressed. Open—garden—daylight does not bear a great variety of gaudy colours. Every tint and material looks tawdry and coarse, compared with the flowers and the skies; and nothing seems to harmonize with the landscape but simple white. I quite agree with the poet (Cowper, I believe) who loved nothing so well as to see a woman in a white dress sitting under a green tree. But, at Lady Sittingbourne's villa, even the trees were decked out “ornate and gay;” so that their dryads and hamadryads could not be too fine to do them honour. When I give a breakfast, every thing shall be fresh, sweet, and natural. We will feed under a solid roof; but roam about among the flowers and birds, under the canopy of heaven.

I was rather disgusted yesterday by the conduct of Mr. Penrhyn. Shrewd as he is, he must perceive that Herbert uniformly avoids

him ; yet, though he saw we were together, nothing would prevent his sauntering about after us, and ruffling my brother-in-law's rare good-humour. He has been staying a week in Surrey for the Epsom races, and seems determined to make up for the time lost of my society. A man who has been passing a week in a country-house is sure to be a bore. After August, in the usual routine of things, a popular man goes from house to house, and rubs off the habits of each before he reaches the next. Not so at this season of the year, when change from London is a strange vicissitude, calculated to make an impression. Mr. Penrhyn, accordingly, was full of Stonelands—every thing was compared with Stonelands,—Stonelands, of course, obtaining the preference. Lady Sittingbourne's flower-garden, for instance, which, though a villa-Paradise for peris, is not to be named with the shrubberies and wildernesses of a place thirty miles from town. “ The conservatories at Stonelands were so magnificent ; thirty different species of the air-plant, and a vanilla plant covering a trellise a hundred feet

long ; Lady Sittingbourne's greenhouses looked so Covent-Gardenish and vulgar ! ” Then, at dinner, a fine haunch excited his disgust ; “ the venison-haricot at Stonelands had put him out of conceit with roasts so early in the season ; — at least a fortnight too early for buck venison. A haunch was never eatable till there were French beans to eat with it.”

“ But there are French beans in abundance,” exclaimed Herbert, pointing them out.

“ Ay, ay — *forced* ones — forced, flavourless things, stewed up like *points d'asperges*. Nothing so detestable as dressed vegetables with a *roti*. At Stonelands, the potatoes were served *en chemise*.”

Then, at Stonelands, he had met the Rossanas ; and we had the recapitulation of Lady Laura’s Illyrian airs, and Lady Sophia’s sketches ; perhaps there never was a spot abounding like Stonelands in subjects for the pencil ; and the Stonelands music-room was built after a design from Dr. Burney ; nothing like it in England to give effect to Handel’s music.”

Observing Herbert to be on the fret, I gave my arm to Mr. Penrhyn, and walked away ; and, by way of a topic of conversation as remote as possible from Stonelands, selected Lord Hartston's two recent speeches.

“ Oh ! *you* are turning politician ? ” cried he, with a sneer. “ I have been quite worn down with politics at Stonelands ! Lord Hartston's speech on the poor laws ? True ! I recollect. Lord Rossana observed that Hartston was always building up cast-iron dens to cage canary-birds ; or, no ! that was not exactly it,— was always making gilt-wire aviaries to encage eagles ; or, upon my soul, I forget how it was ; but I remember that we all laughed amazingly at the remark. We were discussing, by the way, for breakfast, some *rognons à la brochette*, that would have put George Hanton into a fever.”

“ The speech made a great impression in London,” said I, disgusted with his frivolity.

“ Of course it did, because Hartston himself has made a great impression in London. There was such a fuss, if you remember, about

his being lost with his yacht last year in the *Ægean*; and when he turned up, and it turned out (according to the inquiries set on foot by the false reports) that Hartston had a clear forty thousand a-year, every body seemed determined to encumber his estate with a jointure. All the world wanted to marry him. But Hartston is devilish sly. You should have seen how cleverly he made off when the Crowhurst made up to him. Hartston knows what he is about. The marchioness would be glad enough to hook him for Lady Alicia; but, like other prodigious fishes, he will break her line and disappoint her."

Nothing I dislike more than to hear a man of family and fortune, like Mr. Penrhyn, talk of "hooking," and "husband-hunting," and so forth. In describing others as matrimonial prizes, he is far more suspicious of projects entertained against himself. He fancies himself in continual danger of being carried off by some manœuvring mamma. His game with myself I can readily discern. He is deferring his proposals till he can make sure of being accepted;

and though, to any man honestly in love, and honestly intentioned towards me, I should not scruple to afford a hint to prevent him from compromising his dignity by a useless pursuit, I shall certainly leave Mr. Penrhyn to his own enlightenment.

Before we left Lady Sittingbourne's, Herbert invited me to dine with them to-morrow, to meet his sallow friend ; but, after all I had heard and seen, I judged it more dignified to stay away. Besides, I hate an early obligato dinner on Sundays. I like to go late to the Zoological Gardens, and remain there among the last ; that is, among all the pleasant people.

— I have been reading over the last fifty pages of my diary, and am shocked by its egotism. I certainly intended to write of myself—of my feelings and perceptions : yet, though I have written more of others, and less of my own experience than I purposed, I seem to have written more selfishly than I thought was in my nature. I have extenuated nothing of the frailties of my acquaintance, nor set down aught in malice of my own. I had intended to

keep my journal for reperusal in old age, in the hope of diverting myself with the follies of my youth ; but I suspect that if this little volume and myself should both survive, I should be shocked, rather than amused, by the picture it presents.

If anger be a brief madness, that which we call the season is, alas ! a long one. However sober our views in the commencement, — however deliberately we fill the cup, and sip the nectarious contents, yet, at the moment we ought to lay it aside, a wild intoxication comes over us, and we quaff again and again, till all is reeling sensuality ! We mean to be frugal, — we become prodigal ; we mean to be sage, — we become giddy ; we mean to be wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best, — and all ends in a frothy vortex of dissipation. At first, we are inconvenienced by the heated atmosphere of the ball-room ; towards the close of the season it becomes habitual. At first, we are shocked by the rumour of a scandal ; towards the close of the season, we repeat them ourselves. At first, our better taste revolts against any

new and preposterous fashion ; towards the close of the season, we have exhausted these old extravagances, and are imagining new. At first, we shrink from the familiarity of the man who leans into our carriage, or enters our opera-box without ceremony ; towards the close of the season, everybody is familiar with everybody ; conversation is worn down from small-talk into smaller, as the gravel of the “ring” has been ground into stifling dust. By degrees, people adopt a jargon technical as a telegraphic dispatch ; and to listen to the dialogue of two persons of fashion, who have been frequenting the same parties and people for the last three months, would sadly perplex any rational expounder of the king’s English. Every phrase is couched in cant terms, conventional allusions, local jests ; and the fine, who look upon the cockney dialect of their housemaids as the most vulgar in the language, might themselves be convicted of the utterance of idioms derived from sources far less pure than “the well of English undefiled.”

The clubs are, in some measure, the origin

of the circulation of fashionable slang. Politics and the turf may, and doubtless *do*, supply the staple of their talk. But, after beef and mutton, comes the course of trifles and anchovy-toast ; and idle people, who meet to gossip with each other, on indifferent subjects, thirty days in the month, insensibly adopt a conventional way of talking, a cant slang of triviality, and a habit of exaggeration and embellishment. Trace some tale of current scandal to its source, and we shall find the tints of the picture heightened as it passes from club to club ; beginning with pale pink at mild, indolent, sober-suited Boodle's ; and glaring from vermillion to crimson as it blushes through the Travellers' and Crockford's. The anecdote and phrase in which it is couched are circulated at home by the husband or brother ; and, at last, the "hyperbolical fiend," called Fashion, is taught to vent its pribbles and prabbles in a tone as jingling and paltry as that of the silver bell hung round the neck of my lady's lap-dog. But again I am inveighing against the errors of others ; for I

have neither husband nor brother to initiate me into the accidence of fashionable slang ; yet the influence of the season has operated as unfavourably on myself as on all the rest.

I wonder whether it would be possible to apply one's lip to this said poisoned chalice, after Lady Grace's fashion—"soberly?" Dr. Johnson, and other mouthers of big words, have told us, that "abstinence is easier than temperance :" but is sobriety,—in a certain class, and educated as nine-tenths of us are now educated,—*is* sobriety a *possible* virtue?

Here are my next-door neighbours, for instance,—no sillier, I imagine, than *their* neighbours, and belonging to an order of society which the Thurtells of *our* society are apt to designate respectable ; instead of "a gig," they keep "a family coach." Jesting apart, they are people who toast church and state, pay their taxes cheerfully, and dole out their Christmas chaldrons and blankets to the poor : righteous people in their generation,—thinking no evil, because thinking is a thing out of their

rovince; a thing for which they pay the king's ministers, the rector of the parish, and their family solicitor.

Yet, for the last ten years, nothing has been pouring into the ears of her daughters, but a leperous distilment, flavoured with the joys of a London season. For this, the progress of their education has been hastened; all their knowledge was to be acquired, all their accomplishments rubbed in, with a view to "coming out."—"For heaven's sake! Mary, don't poke so, or I shall never venture to take you up to town to be presented;"—or, "My dear Jane, you have not been in the stocks this morning. Consider how mortified you will be, your first season in town, when you find yourself so much awkwarder than other girls."—"Harriet! who on earth cut off that lock of hair just in sight?" "*I* did, Mamma, to give to my brother James, before he sailed for India." "How inconsiderate! Have you forgotten that, the season after next, you are going to town to be presented; and that it

takes two years for a ringlet to grow properly ? I am exceedingly displeased with you. Well, don't cry ; that won't remedy the matter ; and, perhaps, before you come out, ringlets may be out of fashion." The season and its balls are, in short, the Mahomedan heaven and its houris, promised to incite the virtues of these innocent beings ; till, at length, they are snatched from the governess, torn from their village schools and feminine routine of rural benevolence, and thrust into the meretricious world of London ; their fair shoulders bared, their fair locks tortured, their fair minds scribbled over by the nonsense of every flirting fool ; — and, amid the glare of brilliant ball-rooms, the voluptuous harmonies of delicious orchestras, the fragrance of exotics, the rattle, the dash, the splendour, the flattery, the whirl of London, the nectar foams brightly at their lips, which is to be tasted " soberly."

And now, having had a peck at the mote in my brother's eye, and moralized my fill, at the expense of the Ronsham Greshams,—away to the Zoological ; where, as it is Sunday, man

and beast, with a reasonable proportion of the females of both, are waiting the good-fellowship of the public; that is, not the *very* public public. The public who privilege themselves by a payment of so much per annum, to evade the payment of so much per diem, are alone permitted to enter this Eden of Northern Marylebone on the Sabbath-day. Into sweet, fresh, grassy Kensington Gardens, on the contrary, all the unliviered human species are free to enter; and the *beau monde* has, accordingly, taken refuge from tigers of the biped, among tigers of the quadruped species. While admiring the antics of the chimpanzee, we are supposed to be secure from contact with apes of an obscure race, or baboons of other than distinguished pedigree.

So!—a vastly agreeable morning I had provided for myself! Lord Clackmannan, who, on all days but Sundays, is busy with the cares of office, undertook to escort me, and Lady Alicia was to be our companion; when, lo! scarcely had we penetrated so far through the gay throng as the bear-pit, when Clarence

managed to attach himself to the side of his fair cousin ; and thenceforward I might have been at the bottom of the pit, for any thing the anxious, vigilant father cared to the contrary. We were too many to walk together ; and as there was no chance that the marquess would relinquish Alicia's arm under such circumstances, I accepted the offered civilities of George Hanton, and left Lord Clackmannan to her guardianship.

Now, as to the arm of Mr. Hanton, I protest I took it with as much indifference as I should have taken that of "Sare Delafals," or any other equally uninteresting individual. I scarcely knew who was beside me, as I amused myself with the passing groups of the highly unselect select, and reflected within myself, that an *air endimanché* is fifty times more vulgar in a gentlewoman than in the grocer's wife on whom gentlewomen waste their wit ; when, lo ! no sooner had we passed the tunnel, than, following the motley multitude towards the elephant's enclosure, we lost sight of Lord Clackmannan. I noticed the fact to my com-

panion, but as a matter of indifference; for her father was chaperon enough for Lady Alicia; and as to any feeling of consciousness at finding myself alone with George Hanton, I should as soon have shrunk from a *tête-à-tête* with my grandfather.

“ How horrible to watch that monster’s voracity ! ” said he, after we had stopped for a minute to contemplate the showers of cakes and gingerbread swallowed by the elephant : “ how thankful one ought to be to Providence, for bestowing upon ourselves discrimination of palate ! ” And, having uttered this pious apostrophe, he drew me onwards to an enclosure containing some animals apparently out of zoological fashion,—tapirs, or I scarcely know what,—against the palings of which he resolutely fixed me; so resolutely, that I scarcely knew what to make of a certain pressure of the arm which accompanied the movement.

“ It gratifies me very much,” he began, “ that the number of weeks during which my present intentions have been made manifest, must secure me, in your eyes, from all appear-

ance of a disrespectful precipitancy ; but now, my dear Mrs. Delaval, that we seem at last so perfectly to understand each other, I see no reason why we should longer defer those mutual acknowledgments, which ought to precede all other preliminaries between us."

I was literally dumb with astonishment. He was as likely to meet with an answer from *me*, as from the tapirs that were routing their long noses at us through the palings.

" In those secondary points, however," added he, " I flatter myself I need anticipate little contrariety. My income amounts to five-and-twenty hundred a-year—yours, I fancy, to something more—(more than double, of which he was well aware !)—and I have a comfortable, well-situated house, which we need only re-furnish, to render it all you can wish. Our habits of life, in other respects, assimilate. We are both fond of society—both of the same tastes and modes of thinking ; for, though I have not yet the honour to be admitted familiarly to your house, I have had much pleasure in learning from my friend, Clarence, that your

table and *chef* are among the best in London. (Our ‘modes of *thinking!*’) Under these circumstances, I feel our mutual felicity to be secure. Our fortune, though not large, is sufficient for two persons possessed of a capital house in town for the season, who spend the remainder of the year with their friends, and are not ambitious of a family. An occasional winter at Paris, or autumn at Spa, or Carlsbad, might vary the scene; and as we should command the best society, and”—

“Stay!” cried I, as one of the long-nosed beasts made a direct attack upon my instep, which seemed to restore me to my recollection; “I am very wrong to allow you to proceed in this way when—”

“No, no! you are every thing that is good and kind. Believe me, I fully appreciate your motives in permitting me to give free interpretation to my sentiments; (his *sentiments!*) and you must suffer me to congratulate myself that—”

“I am not aware that you have any cause

for self-gratulation," said I, growing angry; for——"

" Your amiable modesty may look upon the thing in that point of view," persisted my admirer; " but believe me, that, although I have had hundreds of opportunities of allying myself most advantageously during the last few seasons,—though, in fact, the dowager Duchess of Hampshire nearly forced her daughter, Lady Ellen, upon me last autumn in the Highlands,—while the persecution I bore for years from Lady Katherine and her daughter has become a matter of history,—still, I assure you, I do not entertain the smallest ambition of forming a higher connexion than with yourself."

" It therefore vexes me the more," said I, determined to be heard, " that my own feelings on the subject"—

But vain was my attempt to be explicit. We had now reached the bird-houses; and, from the circle of delighted auditors listening to the *gentillesses* of the pink cockatoo, who

was sidling on his stand in the sunshine, a whole party of the Beresfords caught sight of me, and in a minute I was surrounded ; my arm still inclosed in that of George Hanton, and exposed to the high-pressure of his tender gratitude. The usual ejaculations followed—“ Isn’t this a doat of a bird ? ” “ Quite a darling ! ” “ Such a dear, nice creature ! ” “ Pretty Poll ! ” “ Cocoa ready ? ” “ Did you stay out the ballet last night ? ” “ Couldn’t get my carriage up. Stupid old coachman—been in the family these thirty years—must get rid of him ! ” “ Pretty Poll ! ” “ Wasn’t Fanny Elsler divine in that *pas de trois* ? ” “ God save great George, our king ! ” “ La ! ma ! what an old parrot it *must* be—it says, God save King *George* ! ” “ My dear, parrots is like hoaks—they lives a hage vich is a *great* hage. Don’t you remember when you studied hornithology along with Miss Sycamore ? ” “ Yes, ma ! ” “ Heavens ! Mrs. Delaval—did you hear that woman ? And they pretend that the society here on Sundays is select ! ” “ Take care—my dear Lady Alicia, take care—parrots

are as insidious as monkeys. That creature is making for your shoulder." " Do you remember what old Lady Burlington said when her macaw bit a piece out of her friend's arm— ' I hope to Heaven it won't make the poor dear creature sick !'" " Naughty Poll!" &c. &c.

In short, I had gradually rejoined Alicia and her father; and there was no immediate opportunity for resuming my odious explanations. Mr. Hanton wore the impertinent smile of a favoured lover; and, could any thing have increased the ugliness of a face so vulgar, so common, so unintellectual, he would have been more than usually disgusting.

We were soon joined by Lord Lancaster and Lord Hilton, and loitered about the gardens with the Beresfords, making the same sapient remarks uttered there Sunday after Sunday; such as—" What a vastly conjugal couple!" " Who? Mr. and Mrs. William C.?" " No! that pair of blue and buff macaws! What a fate; to be caged in eternal fidelity, as an example for ladies and gentlemen!" " How those chamois remind one of Cha-

mouny ! Dear Switzerland !—Lord Hilton, were you ever in Switzerland ? How enchanting it would be to be passing this hot day in a *châlet*, in one of those delicious valleys ! Switzerland is quite my passion. I mean to go to Lady Rossana's *fête costumée* as an *Appenzelloise*." "Is Lady Rossana going to give a *bal costumé*?" "Haven't you your card?" "No. A fancy-ball !—How Irish ! how vulgar ! Always wanting to do something out of the common way." "Shall I get you invited?" "Thank you. Yes—I suppose one must be there." "La ! ma !—what's that bird as big as a turkey, what sits so sulky on its perch ?" "An eagle." "Bill, I say, yonder great beast's an eagle." "What's a heagle ? I never seed a heagle." "You naughty boy ! Don't you remember the Spread Eagle, opposite uncle John's, in Gracechurch Street ?" "Just listen to those ignorant barbarians !" "And then, people talk of the diffusion of knowledge, and the advantage of penny libraries ! Do let us go, Lady Evelyn, and see the kangaroos swallow their young." "Do they really swallow

them?" "To be sure—I have seen them a thousand times."

We were leaving the gardens at a quarter before eight, to dress for dinner. Lord Clackmannan's carriage coming round first, he and Lady Alicia left me to the care of Lords Lancaster and Hilton, Mr. Hanton retaining the most obstinate possession of my arm; all three talking and laughing loud, by way, I suppose, of making themselves conspicuous: when, lo! in walked Herbert, arm-in-arm with Lord Hartston. Instead of stopping, my brother-in-law touched his hat to me with the most provoking air of superciliousness: his companion looked pointedly away.

"My friend, Hartston, is growing the greatest of great men," said Hanton, impertinently. "He has never lost the air with which he used to declaim, on Harrow speech-days, 'My name is Caius Marcius!'"

"I cannot laugh at Hartston," replied Lord Hilton, with more good sense than I expected from him. "Hartston is an honour to the times, and the hope of the country.

I am always willing to take off my hat to Hartston as low as he pleases."

"Probably he pleases little or nothing about the matter," muttered Hanton, putting me into my carriage, with a look and smile of most provoking significance. And, as I turned off into the ring, there stood the ugly creature, affecting to watch me out of sight, while Lord Lancaster and Lord Hilton planted themselves behind him, bursting with laughter at his affected attitude of sentimentality. As I was pretty sure of meeting the wretch, if I pursued my intention of going, as usual, to Arlington Street, I resolved to stay at home, and, after dinner, dispatch to his "well-situated mansion," a letter expressive of regret, that I should have given him sufficient encouragement to mislead him into proposals which, for reasons unnecessary to explain, I begged to decline.

At one o'clock in the morning, probably after his return from the marchioness's, just as I was preparing to retire to bed, arrives the following cool, impudent, disingenuous answer.

“ My dear Mrs. DELAVAL,

“ I am at a loss to conjecture what part of our conversation this morning you can have so completely misinterpreted as to suppose me bold enough to aspire to the honour of your hand ; more particularly as I fancied it was known to all the world, that I am any thing but a marrying man. Hoping this little *mésentendu* will produce no change in the friendly feelings between us, I have the honour to be your devoted servant,

G. HANTON.”

Monday. — Too cross, all day, to write a syllable.

Tuesday. — Went this morning to sit with Armine, and found her busy with her usual stitchery, in a close stifling drawing-room, with a canvass-covered spelling-book, a slate, and two greasy-looking weekly account-books, lying near her work-box. How mortifying to see my elegant-minded sister humbled into a drudge ! — for, after all, this milder species of

drudgery is more vexatious to a proud spirit than *actual* labour; and, for the sake of a husband who so little seems to appreciate the sacrifice!

My sister's face, as she bent over her cambric muslin, seemed rather portentous. Supposing her grave looks to originate in some domestic disarrangement, I ventured to make inquiries.

“ Any thing the matter ? ” said I.

“ No, nothing the matter ; only the idea of your marrying that Mr. Penrhyn vexes me.”

“ *My* marrying Mr. Penrhyn ? ”

“ Herbert, you know, so particularly dislikes him, that I fear the marriage will cause an estrangement among us. No doubt you are better acquainted with his merits, and judge him more truly than we do ; but”—

“ Pray let me interrupt you by inquiring what makes you suppose I have any idea of forming such an alliance ? ”

“ Oh, Herbert and Lord Hartston say that you cannot be otherwise than engaged to him ; that you *ought*, in fact, to be engaged to him ! ”

“They do me too much honour by taking so deep an interest in my affairs. But I beg leave to differ from them. I am *not* engaged to Mr. Penrhyn.”

“Then why, my dear sister,” cried Armine, dropping her work into her lap, — “why on earth were you seen with him alone in your carriage last week, at five o’clock in the morning?”

“Oh! are you *there*?” said I, laughing at her look of consternation; “why, because it *was* five o’clock in the morning, a bright sunshiny morning, light and public as noon-day. I remained much later than usual at Almack’s, and Mr. Penrhyn, who put me into the carriage, asked me, in all humility, to take him home, as he could not find his cabriolet. Perhaps it would have been wiser to propose sending back the carriage when it had left me in St. James’s place; but, in pity to his thin shoes and tired face, I at once consented to set him down in Albemarle Street. As we passed the steps of Crockford’s, Lord Lancaster and half a dozen of the *élite* of the *roués* were

standing on the steps,—smoking, laughing, and quizzing all who went by; from the squeaking chimney-sweepers to the gay people from Almack's. Penrhyn nodded to these men, as we took our turn in the ordeal; and, it appears, we were not *quittes pour la peur*. The wretches have chosen to make mischief."

"It is very much to be lamented," observed Armine, gravely, "that so trifling an indiscretion should be the means of uniting you to a man of whom the best judges entertain so ill an opinion."

"You almost provoke me into taking up his defence!" cried I. "Do you suppose that I am to be frightened into accepting Mr. Penrhyn because such people as Mr. Herbert and Lord Hartston decide that my reputation requires mending?"

Armine reddened in her turn. "My husband has a true affection for you, Harriet; and Herbert assures me this silly adventure has made you the talk of the clubs."

"A proof of what trivialities their conversation must consist. I wonder so wise a man

as Mr. Herbert can make up his mind to pass a large portion of his life among such empty gossips."

" Nevertheless, the clubs give the tone to London conversation. The politician, the country gentleman, the literary man, the connoisseur, the dandy, each has his peculiar club, at which the chief subject in which he is interested forms the leading topic of conversation. And, just as people believe a ministerial rumour circulated at Brookes's, they will believe a scandalous story emanating from Crockford's."

" But I see no scandal in the matter. Mr. Penrhyn sat three minutes and a half in my chariot, with the windows down, in open daylight. Where is the crime of such a circumstance?"

" It is contrary to etiquette. A young woman and young man, seen together in such a position, are naturally supposed to be under engagements to each other. It will not do, my dear Harriet, to brave the opinion of the world. Remember that disregard of etiquette

lost Maria Antoinette her throne, her life; it may lose you — ”

“ My reputation!—Yes! you really mean to infer that, after five and twenty years of prudent conduct, my good name is injured by taking a man home from Almack’s! What intolerable nonsense!”

“ Forgive me, if I have offended you; but I thought it right you should be aware that all the world is talking of your marriage with Mr. Penrhyn.”

“ For all the world, read Mr. Herbert and his old-maidish friend, Lord Hartston. My compliments to both, and tell them I shall invite into my carriage whom I please, and at whatever hour may suit me. And now, let us talk of something else.”

Our next subject was not much more agreeable than the preceding one. Herbert has resolved to leave London on the first of July; and I have, therefore, only another fortnight to enjoy of Armine’s society. She is still eager that I should fulfil my promise of passing a month or two of the autumn with them in Bed-

fordshire, and still confident of my acquiescence ; but I cannot bear the thoughts of becoming an inmate under the same roof with Herbert, more especially a roof where his authority prevails. I am sure we should disagree.

Just as the carriage was turning down Brook Street, after I left my sister, it was suddenly stopped, and Herbert himself appeared at the window.

“ I wish you joy ! ” said he, with one of his bitterest sneers.

“ Thank you ! ” I replied, resolved not to gratify him by inquiring the cause of his felicitations.

“ Ah ! you had heard it already ? I was in hopes, I should be the first person to convey the joyful tidings.”

“ What joyful tidings ? ” cried I, startled out of my resolution.

“ The death of Lord Penrhyn. I have just come from the club. The old man died at eight this morning ; leaving a clear rent-roll of seventy thousand a-year, four magnificent country houses, and one in town. You are in luck ! I wish you good morning.”

My unexpressed wishes for *him* were far less amiable ; but, resolved not to appear disconcerted, I kissed my hand as the carriage drove on. I was going to Smith's, for the purpose of getting a bracelet mended ; and, while giving my orders, in came Lady Mardynville ; who, instead of pursuing her business, whatever it might be—if, indeed, she had any but to be disagreeable—began curtseying and simpering with such an enormous accession of deference, that I am convinced she has heard the false report of my marriage, and the true one of Lord Penrhyn's death. Terrified lest she should accost me with congratulations before all the shopmen, which would spread the story from one end of London to the other, I talked so fast and so confusedly to Smith about the snap of my stupid bracelet, that *he* must have thought me bewitched, while *she*, doubtless, believed me to be giving orders for a *rivière* of brilliants. At last I hurried away, as if making off with some of the trinkets I had been turning over.

In what a curious position have I involved myself! Here am I condemned by the voice

of the world to marry, by way of penance, a man, the very idea of whose importance has set Lady Mardynville's knees bobbing! Seventy thousand a-year! And I, who am thought so rich, and who find myself so rich, with *six*! What might one not do with so classical an income! What might one not do *for* it, except marry an unprincipled, heartless man like Mr. Penrhyn? I beg his pardon, Lord Penrhyn. To be sure, every one is not so prejudiced against him as Herbert. I know many houses where he is a great favourite. At the time Mrs. Percy exposed herself on his account, no one seemed to think it extraordinary; and certainly his prospects of fortune could have nothing to do with *her engouement*. Now, of course, every one will think him charming; so that the applauses of the world will, for the future, go for nothing. To-morrow, Ascot with Lady Cecilia.

Friday.—I prefer Ascot a thousand times to Epsom. The road is less rural, but more amusing. The rabble-rout, inseparable from a

race-course, is, at Ascot, a rustic, at Epsom, a swell mob ; the company is more select ; and, above all, the presence of royalty dignifies the affair. The prickers in scarlet liveries, who keep the ground, give an air of courtliness to the place ; and one feels to be in the near neighbourhood of

Thy forest, Windsor, and thy green retreats.

Lady Cis was not in spirits. She should not attempt such exertions ; for public places of all kinds are her abhorrence ; and she is the least locomotive person in the world. No one can be a more charming *causeuse* ; but, to converse like her sex, she must be sitting in her own chair, with her feet on her own footstool, her own lapdog on the sofa near her, and her own *sachet* of *maréchale* powder lying on the table by her side. Her mind is so *acclimaté* to her boudoir, that elsewhere she becomes absent and fretful. Yesterday, she found the day too hot, the roads too dusty ; she could not arrange our parasols to her liking ; and, when we arrived on the course, was distracted by the noise

of tabors and fifes, and the bawling of the pea-and-thimble men ; and would have it that our horses were *going to be* frightened. Her ordinary movements are so circumscribed, that she is not prepared for the common occurrences of life ; and yesterday she was herself so bored, that, had it not been for Clarence, she would have ended with boring *me*. Happy they who know no other calamity in life than that of being *bored*! Yet, in this world of tortures and privations, how many of us presume to complain of *that* as of the greatest of evils.

“ All the world” was at Ascot ; and Lord Clackmannan, as master of the buckhounds, or the horse, or I know not what, managed to procure us a privileged place on the course, opposite to the royal stand, where we saw “ all the world” to advantage. Lady C. and Lady Alicia were with the king and queen ; and Clarence had the happiness of doating upon his idol through an opera-glass the whole of the day. Lord Hartston passed us twice ; and I observed the Duke of Merioneth, who was talking to us at the time, take off his hat with

the deference he would have shewn to a prince of the blood. What influence resides in a celebrated name! How far beyond all ordinary distinctions of rank!

I perceive that the report of my engagement to Lord Penrhyn has gained ground. The duke inquired of me when I intended to leave town for the season; then checked himself, observing, “But I beg pardon—I conclude nothing is yet settled?” Vexed by his inference, I confided my dilemma to Cecilia, who treated it as a delicate distress not worth mentioning. “Leave people to find out their mistake,” said she, with her usual languid air of indifference; “or, if you like it better, convert the mistake into reality. You know I have long recommended you to marry Penrhyn.”

“But, as he has never even hinted an intention of proposing”—

“Of course not. Lord Penrhyn is too much a man of the world, and knows too well his own value, to fling his hand at the head of any woman on a short acquaintance. People of his kind are seldom in a hurry to be married.

It is only boys like Clarence, or old lords dropping into an estate and wanting an heir, who play the fool-hardy in such matters."

—We came back from Ascot, tired, dusty, thirsty, sunburnt, cross; and doubly cross at finding ourselves engaged to a late dinner at old Lady Burlington's. But the dinner revived us. The room was cool; the party, intelligent and chatty. I heard the dowager say to L——, who sat next her at table, "I have been moving heaven and earth this season to get that Lord Hartston; but he will not be had. I have written to him, and told him I was godmother to his grandfather; I have been *at* him through every living creature of his acquaintance, from his sister to his bootmaker; but the man is inflexible. I fancy he is afraid of being decoyed into one of my lion-feeds; but I hope I appreciate him better. Fox, you know, was my great friend; so was Sheridan, so was Burke, so was Fitzpatrick; and I shall go miserable to my grave, unless Lord Hartston dines with me before the season is over."

"No; pray don't die while you have so

good a cook," said her neighbour, helping himself to an *épigramme de volaille piqué aux crevettes*. " You only want Hartston as a novelty—in managerial phrase—to draw a good house for you. I cannot pretend to assist you, because he is my friend, and with my friends I never take liberties. But you shall have him in small change. I will procure you several stars of lesser magnitude, all newly discovered ; a Pole who——"

" Not for the universe ! In spite of our dear Lord Dudley, those Poles are quite *rococo*."

" A Pole whose hands were worked off in the mines of Siberia. He goes about in hanging sleeves, and has trained a poodle to fetch and carry for him. I believe he was a Bedouin last season—*mais c'est égal*. Then you shall have a dandy American, talking fashion, Shakespeare, and the musical glasses, in a style to make the fortune of a Margate M.C. ; and, *par supplément*, a fine lady novelist, who sends you her new work with a little perfumed billet, begging you will ' nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.' "

“ Thank you, thank you,” cried the old lady, beginning to see through her friend’s *persiflage*, “ I will not trust to *you*; I shall try and engage the influence of Mrs. Delaval’s bright eyes. Mrs. Delaval, my dear, are you acquainted with Lord Hartston? Yes, now I think of it, you *must* be. You both came into fashion about the same time; and I know he is *faufilé* with that good-looking, disagreeable, brother-in-law of yours, who lives in Park Lane.”

“ New Norfolk Street,” insinuated one of her neighbours.

“ Never mind where. I really wish, my dear, you would get me presented to him.”

“ To my disagreeable brother-in-law?”

“ No, no; the other. Tell him I have the greatest respect for him, and so forth; and that I was the friend of Fox, Burke, Windham, and so forth; and that I hope to have the honour of seeing him at dinner, either the 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th of June, or the 7th or 8th of July.”

“ I am sorry to say, I have not the pleasure of knowing Lord Hartston.”

“Haven’t you? How stupid!—he would have made a charming match for you. By the way, my dear child, they say you are to marry Lord——what’s the name of the man who has that fine property in Yorkshire?”

“There are so many men who have fine property in Yorkshire.”

“But I mean that man with mines, or iron-works, or quarries, or something or other; the man who wears a great bush of hair, as if his ears had been cropped.”

“Your ladyship means, perhaps, Lord Penrhyn?” said some one, taking pity on my confusion.

“Do I? I dare say I do. Salmi,” turning to her *maître d’hotel*, “remind me to ask Lord Penrhyn to dinner as soon as his grandfather has been dead a fortnight.” And, fortunately for me, in the discursiveness of her ideas, she had already forgotten the matter which brought him on the tapis. “I will have the Percies to meet him. And now, *mes bons amis*, that the ices are on the table, I give you all leave to talk about Ascot. Had I not interdicted the

subject during dinner, I should have heard of nothing else; and I detest races. I have not been to a race these sixty years."

Friday.—How odiously provoking! When the *Morning Post* was brought me at breakfast, so little did I imagine it could contain any thing of personal interest to myself, that I ran through a whole column about Ascot, before I was attracted by a paragraph headed "THE LATE LORD PENRHYN," beginning with an account of his "crimson Genoa velvet coffin, with silver-gilt handles and plate;" and ending with, "We learn that the present Lord, who is in his forty-first year, is about to lead to the hymeneal altar the lovely and accomplished Mrs. Delaval, widow of Colonel Delaval, of Delaval Castle, and daughter to the late distinguished General Sir Richard Montresor, K.B."

I am now, indeed, perplexed. If I send a denial to the newspaper, Lord Penrhyn may say, "Mrs. Delaval might have waited till she was asked;" while, if I allow the assertion to remain unnoticed, the fact will be admitted as

certain. I know not whom to consult. Herbert is so ungracious on the subject ; and Lady Cecilia considers every thing so unimportant that does not relate either to herself or Clarence. I foresee that I shall be exposed to all sorts of annoyances by this foolish history. It would not surprise me to receive a letter in the course of the day from Lady Mardynville, asking me to stand godmother to her next child !

How the season brightens ! I expected that, by this time, my gaieties would a little relax ; instead of which, this morning has brought cards for four balls, two breakfasts, and a *féte costumée*. Dissipation seems to grow with what it feeds on ; and, now the intoxication of pleasure has become fairly epidemic, all calculation, all moderation, is thrown aside. No one has a moment for reflection. The vigils of the ball over-night leave one scarcely time to dress in the morning for the business of the day, viz. visits and the Park. Then another toilet, and a dinner party ; then another, and more balls. The sound of an orchestra is perpetually in one's ears ; and full dress so

habitual, that I shall scarcely know myself again in “white linen.” I should like a week’s quiet, and then a recommencement. The six *months’* quiet which really *will* follow all this stir and sparkling, does not seem altogether so desirable. I am now so accustomed to live in a crowd, that I dread “the clock and crickets,” which sound so loud in the stillness of a dull home.

Saturday.—Verily, I have my revenge for the insolent, sneering bow with which George Hanton passed me the other day in the Park ; and which was intended less for me than for Lord Lancaster and Sir Jervis Hall, with whom he was riding ; *ample revenge !* Yesterday, as I was on a variety visit to Mrs. Hemstitch (the mantua-maker who formerly read me such a lecture on fine-ladyism), I met, on the stairs, a fine lad of about fifteen, his eyes swollen out of his head with crying. As the good woman happened to be alone, I asked her, indiscreetly enough, whether the youth was her son, and what was the cause of his tribulation.

“ *My* sons, madam, are at decent schools, and, I trust, in decent clothing,” said she, proudly. “ If you had examined that poor lad, you would have perceived him to be almost in rags. He is in affliction for his father, who is dying in one of my attics.”

“ Do you let lodgings ?” said I, as inconsiderately as before.

“ No, madam ; I simply afford a miserable refuge to an indigent family.—Have you any orders for me this morning ?”

“ Pray forgive me, if I have offended you,” I persisted : “ but you have now excited my interest. Are these poor people in a situation to which I can afford any—any alleviation ?”

“ If you mean in the way of charity, I believe, madam, that the most trifling sum would be highly acceptable. I am working for a large family of my own, and, consequently, unable to do much for them. I provide them with food and medicine, but the poor old gentleman will soon require a funeral. It ought to be a decent one, for he is a clergyman of the Church of England.”

As she perceived by my countenance that I was now deeply interested, I persuaded her to relate the whole melancholy history. The dying man, it seems, served for many years the curacy of her native place, and eked out a small salary by taking pupils. The state of the times, sickness in his family, and, at length, a paralytic attack, threw him into distress. He was obliged to leave his cure ; and, from trouble to trouble, became an inmate of the Fleet prison.

“ At the commencement of poor Mr. Foster’s distresses, madam,” said Mrs. Hemstitch, addressing me, “ I took his daughter to learn my business ; a very excellent, intelligent girl, much beloved in my establishment. The debt for which her father was taken up, was a small one ; and she was in hopes that one or other of his former pupils would release him. I even wrote a letter for her to one of them (a rich gentleman, of the name of Hanton), stating the circumstances. He refused, however ; saying, that he did not consider it his business to repair the improvidence of others : at last, the sum

was made up among my young people. With my husband's leave, I took in the poor gentleman and his son, who were totally destitute ; and for eight months past they have been my inmates. The lad is a fine, well-taught, scholarly lad, and might make his way in the world, if any one would lend him a helping hand. Many and many a lady among my customers might, with a single word, place him in a situation to earn a livelihood. But one or two to whom I presumed to apply, and who can be courteous enough when they are anxious to have a dress finished by a particular hour, or the sending in of their bill postponed, answered me so harshly, that I was discouraged. I was stupid enough, however, to write again to Mr. George Hanton in favour of the lad, who is his godson ; and he offered to employ him in his stables ! Employ the son of his gray-headed tutor in his stables !—when, as Caroline Forster said, her father and mother had sat up with *him* night after night, when he was a sickly youth ; and, for all he knows in the world, he is indebted to the labours of the

poor curate. Such, madam, is the great world!
—Have you any orders for me this morning?"

My orders, of course, regarded the Forster family. Thank Heaven, I have now an honest excuse to myself for the contempt with which I have always regarded George Hanton.

—So!—half-a-dozen letters of congratulation on my approaching marriage to Lord Penrhyn! It is easy to write and contradict the report; but I am beginning to feel seriously annoyed by the predicament in which I am placed. I learn from the newspapers, that the late lord is to be conveyed to-morrow to the family vault; after which, I conclude, *my* lord will make his re-appearance in public, and, of course, save me the trouble of further vindication. Considering the intimate terms on which we stand, perhaps it would be better if I at once frankly alluded to the report. He might, however, imagine it a *ruse* to bring on a proposal—men are such coxcombs. There lives not the one to whom I would again sacrifice myself in marriage; or *I*, at least, have not at present the honour of his acquaintance.

If the affairs of Cupid do not flourish in *my* establishment, I suspect they are proceeding with much alacrity *chez mes voisines*. Signor Bravura's cabriolet is no longer the only one stationed at the door of Mr. Gresham Ronsham. From twelve o'clock till three, a vehicle of that flash-dandy description which makes one suspect it to be hired for the season, is in constant attendance. As soon as the family-coach rumbles off, on its daily round of visitationing and park-grinding, off gallops the cabriolet, as never well-bred cabriolet was heard to gallop ; and at seven o'clock, so soon as the well-inhabited quarters of the town begin to send forth fumes of soup and patties, back gallops it again ; and a hero, with well-dyed whiskers and mustachios, and well-varnished shoes, leaps out, leaps in, and the ding-dong of the dinner-bell commences. When I return home at night from a party, if lights are still burning in the drawing-room of the Gresham Ronshams, the galloping horse is sure to be pawing impatiently at the Gresham Ronshams' door ; strong symptoms of a courtship in the family ! and,

from a little feverish, anxious patch of red on the cheek of the second daughter, I suspect Miss Augusta to be the favoured Dulcinea. I must inquire of Lady Farrington; and, as I never find a syllable to say to her when we meet, the subject will be a *trouvaille*.

— How good, — how very good of him! I mentioned the story of the Forster family to Herbert, with the view of procuring his advice and assistance in disposing of the poor boy, when released from attendance on his father; and my brother-in-law promised to think the matter over, and in a week let me know the result of his cogitations.

To-day, I went to Mrs. Hemstitch, ostensibly to order a gown, but in reality to learn the state of the old man, without the ostentation of playing the benefactress. I did not intend to proceed immediately to the subject,— the good woman is so blunt and strange! But the moment she could get rid of the dowager Duchess of Hampshire, who was trying to persuade her to make a dress with seven breadths out of eight yards of Sewell and Cross's cheap

narrow satin, she hurried to me with a face so radiant with joy, and such a profusion of thanks, that I hardly knew what to make of her.

“ Such a provision ! such a windfall ! so much above the poor boy’s expectations — though certainly not above his deserts. I am sure, madam, I am as grateful as if it were a son of my own. As to poor Caroline Forster, she has been crying for joy all night, and the old gentleman seems quite revived. He wants to get up and be dressed, but the apothecary has forbid it.”

By degrees, I obtained an explanation. Yesterday morning, George Forster was sent for to Lord Hartston’s office in Whitehall, and examined for two hours by the secretary, as to his proficiency in writing, accounts, and summing up abstracts. He was desired to return at six o’clock, when he had an interview with Lord Hartston himself, and the welcome intelligence that he was appointed to a clerkship of seventy pounds a-year, in an office holding out prospects of advancement. “ Your salary will commence from this day,” said his lordship ;

“ your duties, when I find it expedient to give you notice. At present, they will be performed by a young man attached to my own establishment.”

How I long to thank him for the considerateness with which he has performed this benevolent action! But I keep stern guard over myself; and will not be betrayed by my feelings into what he may fancy an attempt to deprecate the ill opinion he has formed of me. Meanwhile, *libre à moi* to feel as grateful as I please.

—Among the few persons in society whom I really dislike, are Lord Lancaster's mother and sisters. They are all three handsome and clever; but steeped to the lips in persuasion of their own superiority. They have instituted themselves sole priestesses of the temple of fashion; and such pretensions render them at once uneasy and disagreeable. They cannot at all times secure the worship of a foreign prince or a Duke of Merioneth; and to the lesser great they are so uncertain, so supercilious, that nothing can exceed their unpopu-

larity. The inaffability of the two girls is already beginning to assume a pinched, soured, discontented turn of countenance, which has made them old before their time. I meet these people frequently at the duke's, at Lady Clackmannan's, and other elect places ; but have been careful to avoid seeming to seek their acquaintance ; for they have a way of fixing upon one a stony unrecognizing look, intended to mark the most pre-eminent contempt.

To-day, to my great amazement, as I was writing notes in my drawing-room, “Mrs. Percy and Lady Maria Lancaster” were announced ; and, without any further attempt at introduction, I received from the latter a very gracious curtsey. I could by no means understand the visit : for Mrs. Percy has scarcely made her appearance here for the last month ; or, to speak more correctly, from the time Lord Penrhyn began to pay me attention.

“ Is not this a pretty house ? ” said Mrs. Percy, addressing her companion, as soon as they were seated.

Lady Maria raised her eye-glass, glanced round the room, and muttered a scarcely intelligible—"Very!"

"Quite like one of Giroux's baby-houses!"

Another glance, and another faint "Very!"

"One longs to put it all under a glass-shade."

Another glance—no answer.

"And such exquisite flowers! One fancies oneself at *le marché aux fleurs!*"

A smile—no answer.

"I am rather out of conceit with my flowers to-day," said I, determined to take some part in the conversation. "Colvile seems to think that any plant, if forced and out of season, *must* be acceptable. Certainly we are glad to have violets in February, mignonette in March, and moss-roses in April. But when they send me dwarf dahlias in June, it provokes me exceedingly. One does not wish to be reminded of the autumn a day earlier than is necessary; and a dahlia is, at all times, a frightful scentless thing for a drawing-room."

"You have so much poetical sensibility!"

sneered Mrs. Percy. “ For *my* part, I can content myself with a flower-pot and green leaves, a bush of old-man, or a daffy-down-dilly. I don’t *pretend* to know one flower from another. They all serve to fill up a conservatory or a garden ; and, when well-imitated by Batton, look equally charming in one of Herbault’s *paille-de-riz* hats. Dont you think so, Lady Maria ?”

Lady Maria smiled approvingly, but uttered no audible answer.

“ Whom have you next door to you, Mrs. Delaval ? I declare I hear somebody screeching “ *Dove sono*,” half a tone too high ! What a neighbour to suffer under ! Do listen, Lady Maria — how dreadful !”

“ Very.”

“ If I were in your unfortunate case, Mrs. Delaval, I would put down straw, and protest that somebody in the house had a brain-fever, to silence the people.”

“ In London one is obliged to bear and forbear with one’s neighbour.”

“ Do you know that Lady Evelyn Beres-

ford ties up her knocker the moment *hers* come to town ; and if she hears they are going to have a concert, sends in Sir Henry Halford's compliments, and he will not answer for the consequences. I beg your pardon, Lady Maria, for now I remember Lady Evelyn is your cousin."

" Is she ?"

" Of course she is. Old Lord Rockwell's daughter, you know."

" We do not visit her."

At this moment, to my great annoyance, the servants announced Lady Mardynville. The woman has no right to call on me, for I have never intruded upon *her* ; and when she curtseyed into the room, I felt convinced she would try to fasten her acquaintance on Lady Maria Lancaster, or commit me in some other way, equally provoking. While she gabbled through her opening compliments, Mrs. Percy and her friend sat exchanging looks of disgust ; more particularly when she suddenly launched into certain family histories — of her son, Ernest Augustus, having won the rowing match at

Eton ; and her little boy, William Henry, having the chicken-pox, which made her very uneasy, on account of her daughters, Adelaide Ida and Sophia Matilda.

“ But, my dear Mrs. Delaval,” cried she, suddenly interrupting herself, and looking round, as if to ascertain that none but friends were present, “ I must not forget that I came here expressly to offer you my congratulations.”

“ On what account ?” said I, resolved not to appear too readily conscious.

“ Oh, my dear madam ! it is impossible you can affect ignorance, when all London is talking of it.”

“ If you allude,” said I, gaining courage, “ to an idle paragraph, which appeared in one of the morning papers, allow me to assure you that it is as groundless as such reports generally prove to be.”

“ You quite surprise me !” cried Lady Mardynville, trying to look arch ; “ for, I assure you, when I complimented Lady Cecilia Delaval last night, at the Ancient Concert, she did not affect to deny it.”

“ She probably did not think it worth while,” said I, vexed to notice the significant smiles passing between the Percy and Lady Maria ; “ being aware that no one has given it a moment’s credit.”

“ And then, your brother-in-law, Mr. Herbert—I stopped him yesterday, as he was going into Arthur’s ; and he answered my felicitations, by saying, jokingly, that, whenever the ceremony took place, I should officiate as one of the bridesmaids.”

Again, Lady Maria executed a languid smile.

“ Are you going to the Duke of Merioneth’s to-morrow ? ” said I to Mrs. Percy, hoping to change the conversation ; but Lady Mardynville had already begun another speech.

“ But, my dear Mrs. Delaval, what will you say, when I tell you that Lord Penrhyn’s old aunt, Mrs. Margaret Penrhyn, goes about telling every one that the family are quite enchanted with the match ; for that her nephew had an unfortunate *liaison* with some married woman, to which his own marriage would, of course, put an end.”

“ I should say, that Mrs. Margaret Penrhyn knew even less of her nephew’s affairs than the rest of the world,” I replied. Then, scarcely daring to look Mrs. Percy in the face, I renewed my question about the Duke of M.

“ I believe there is nothing at Merioneth House to-morrow night?” said she, coolly addressing Lady Maria.

“ Nothing,” replied her ladyship, calmly.

“ Nothing at Merioneth *House*,” I persisted; “ but the duke gives a small *déjeuner* at his villa.”

“ You are mistaken,” said Lady Maria, with a smile of contemptuous superiority.

“ It is some *déjeuner* at Lady Sittingbourne’s; and people have made confusion,” said Mrs. Percy.

“ No; the *déjeuner* is at Hazlebank,” said I, calmly.

“ The duke was half an hour in our box, at the French play, last night. I assure you he has no breakfast to-morrow at Hazlebank, or elsewhere,” retorted Lady Maria.

Turning to my writing-table, I now quietly

placed in her ladyship's hands a billet, containing the following lines :—

“ Pray, my dear Mrs. Delaval, do not disappoint me of the pleasure of your company on Thursday next. I shall breakfast at Hazlebank at four, — *en petit comté*, my own family, the Clackmannans, Rossanas, Campo-Fioritos, all our own set. Faithfully yours,

“ MERIONETH.”

Lady Maria looked aghast, Mrs. Percy indignant.

“ What an absurd arrangement ! ” cried she. “ A breakfast at four o'clock to spoil your dinner ; and an afternoon spent in talking *Pastor Fido* among the roses and lilies.”

“ I am so fond of plants, that I could not pass my time more agreeably.”

“ How very delightful ! ” ejaculated Lady Mardynville, who had remained dumb during our dispute. “ What an enjoyable little party ! Nothing I have more at heart than to make his grace's acquaintance. Sir Robert has an

estate in Ireland adjoining *his*, which, of course, must make us perfectly known to him by name ; but it happens that I have never had an opportunity of being presented to the Duke of Merioneth, in a manner that would accord with our mutual position in the world."

Lady Maria put up her glass, and stared, as she had formerly done at my room, at the strange woman,—*so* strange as to be unacquainted with his grace of Merioneth ; the strange woman probably entertaining a similar degree of contempt for the party, in whose box his grace could sit for half an hour without honouring them by an invitation to his breakfast. It was a great relief to me when the trio rose to go away. Lord Lancaster quitted Mrs. Crowhurst's side to-day in the Park (who, to do her justice, *does* look like an angel on horseback), to take a turn with me ; when I mentioned to him that, *à propos* of the skies falling, his sister, Lady Maria, had done me the honour of a visit.

“ Called upon you with Mrs. Percy?” he reiterated. “ I wonder what impertinence was on the *tapis* between them? Beware of them! Maria and Mrs. Percy would play Mrs. Candour and Lady Sneerwell better than any actresses that ever graced the stage.”

Amiable enough on *his* part to speak thus of his sister. The Lancasters seem quite a nest of *cobra di manillas*—a sting like the prick of a pin, but venomously fatal.

After dinner, before dressing for Almack’s, I went and sat an hour with Cecilia, who is what she calls “ nervous;” that is, out of humour. She fancies the Clackmannans suspect her of encouraging her son’s attachment to his cousin Alicia; “ Although my sister ought to be well aware,” she observes, “ that the thing is wholly in opposition to my principles. I disapprove of cousins intermarrying.”

“ From a religious scruple?”

“ Religious nonsense! No! Because such matches are fatal to the extension of family

counexion. Then Clarence is poor, and must marry an heiress ; and Alicia has pretensions of the highest order, and ought not to marry any thing under a peerage. An alliance between them would be ruin to both ; and it is all my sister Clackmannan's fault, who chose to let them go on billing and cooing like two canary-birds in a cage, year after year, at Clackmannan Court ; till the two silly creatures fancied they must be intended for a pair. I am always reproving my son,—always watching him, always tormenting him and myself. I see how it will be !—I shall be worn out before the season is over ; and there will be an eternal *brouillerie* between the Clackmannans and myself. My dear Harriet, see what you can do for me with the young people.”

“ Why not send Clarence abroad, as you intended ? ”

“ *Send him !* Clarence will be of age next month. Can I pack him up like a portmanteau

and dispatch him to Paris against his will? He positively declares he will not leave England till he has come to some arrangement with Alicia. There will be a clandestine engagement, a family *esclandre*, and I shall die of one of my nervous attacks."

And nothing but a dose of æther preserved her from a fit of hysterics on the spot. By degrees, however, we began to talk of other things;—the breakfast at Hazlebank,—the Lancasters,—Mrs. Crowhurst,—and, at length, I tried to persuade her to dress and accompany me to Almack's.

"Dress!—how can you be so *inconséquente*? I am horribly ill. I have been sitting in my *peignoir* all day. I have not even had the blinds up. I have not seen a creature except Halford. Dress! I could just as soon ascend Mont Blanc."

"But you will have an opportunity of seeing how things go on between Clarence and his cousin."

“ My dear child, I *do know* how things go between Clarence and his cousin.”

“ But if the duke is there, he will probably ask you to Hazlebank, and you are so fond of a *partie de campagne*.”

“ Yes, but not at a few hours’ notice. The great pleasure of those things is a *demie-toilette bien fraîche*, and very striking. There is no surer criterion of taste than a pretty *demie-toilette*. And I really have nothing new for to-morrow. No! pray don’t talk about dressing. What o’clock is it?”

“ Not ten,—you have plenty of time. Ring and give orders to Gabrielle.”

“ Impossible—quite impossible. My nerves are perfectly shattered. I am not even sure that I have a ticket. I have not been there this fortnight. Is this the first of a new subscription?”

“ No; the last of an old one. I *know* you have one. Let me look in your engagement-box. See! here it is. I shall ring for

Gabrielle, and come back and fetch you at eleven."

" Pray, do not torment me ! Even if I dress, I shall never be able to go. Do you know if my sister is to be there ?"

" Yes ; she begged me to meet her at eleven."

" Well, I shall make the effort, to please *you*. I am always making efforts for the satisfaction of others. Perhaps I may be able to stay half an hour. To say the truth, I rather want to see Lord Wincham or Lord Hartston, without writing to them to come here. I have been thinking it might be possible to get Clarence an *attaché*-ship at Naples or Constantinople ; and one is sure of meeting the ministers at Almack's."

At eleven, accordingly, I called for her ; and never saw her look better or more captivating. The moment the Duke of Merioneth came in, she carried him off to one of the upper benches, where no one was likely to interfere

with her, in the way she has of appropriating people without any appearance of design ; and so successful were her little *agaceries*, that in ten minutes she had not only accomplished an invitation for herself and Clarence to the breakfast, but could have procured one for Lady Mardynville, or any other obnoxious individual, had she been so inclined. While they were chatting together, Mrs. Crowhurst, who affects to palliate her impertinences under a character of originality, sauntered towards them, saying, “ Duke, I find you have a *déjeûner*, to which no one is to be invited ; which makes me, of course, determine to be of the party. Say ‘ yes,’ with a good grace, and tell me how happy you shall be to see me.”

“ *Most* happy, on any other day ; to-morrow, *pas possible*. I have no permission to extend my invitations.”

“ Permission ? from whom ?”

“ That is not my secret. When you give

me one to keep, you shall find me equally faithful to the trust."

And he recommenced his conversation with Lady Cecilia, in a tone that rendered it impossible for Mrs. Crowhurst to renew her attack; so away she went to flutter, "like an eagle in a dovecote," the flock of pigeons she has marked as her own among the lordlings and boy-honourables.

But my own turn was coming. I trust and believe, that nothing is more indifferent to me than the homage of such a man as Lord Penrhyn, whom I neither like nor respect; and I should, indeed, despise myself if, independent as I am, his recent accession of importance could alter my intentions towards him. Nevertheless, I must own myself deeply piqued by the line of conduct he has taken up. I did not dream of meeting him at Almack's; it was hardly decent, I think, that he should appear at a ball so soon after his grandfather's

interment. In these times, few men care for their grandfathers ; but, *les bienséances avant tout!* We parted intimate friends. He was with me in St. James's Place an hour one morning after that unlucky drive from Almack's; chatty, agreeable, *empressé* as usual, —if not *quite* a declared lover, as nearly so as possible. He came to our box, at the opera, on the Saturday night, and sat there a fixture, *comme à l'ordinaire*. On the Monday, Lord Penrhyn died, and of course I saw no more of him.

Last night, at Almack's, having just finished a waltz with my little cousin Clarence, I was proceeding on his arm into the tea-room, when in the doorway, sable-suited as night, or an inheriting peer, stood his lordship. I expected he would extend his hand as usual *en passant*; and almost feared I put out mine to meet it, when, lo! a bow, as frozen and distant as from the Duke of — to a new-made baronet! I was staggered, and only the

more amazed when I saw, that by his side stood his friend, the Crocodile, *bouche béante*! mouth, eyes, and ears, as usual wide open, who has probably circulated the history, by this time, through White's, Crockford's, and the Travellers'.

Lord Penrhyn remained at the ball as long or longer than I did, but never once approached within miles of me. He danced only with Lady Sophia Rossana, and talked only to her family. But I fancied, at one moment, I saw significant looks passing between him and Mrs. Percy. What can be the meaning of all this? Does *he* pretend to resent the newspaper reports of our marriage? or, perhaps, (who knows?) fancies that *his* character was injured by being seen with me *tête-à-tête* in my carriage!

I was half afraid that Clarence, who is *preux comme Bayard*, was going to take more notice than was desirable of the affair. *He* knows the familiar terms existing between myself and Penrhyn only last week; and, I sus-

pect, observed me offer my hand. Glancing at my little cousin just afterwards, I saw his cheeks flushed, and his eyes sparkling.

“ Has there been any coolness between you and Penrhyn ? ” he inquired.

“ *Comme vous voyez,* ” I replied, as equivocatingly as I could.

“ I see only that he is a d——d coxcomb, ” said Clarence, with more warmth than became the time and place ; “ I hope, dear Mrs. Delaval, you will take no further notice of the fellow.”

“ To cut a person is, in *my* opinion, to take the greatest possible notice of him, ” I replied. “ I shall henceforward treat Lord Penrhyn as I feel towards him,—with complete indifference.”

I suspect Clarence related what had occurred to Lady Cecilia ; for she came to me immediately afterwards, and, without saying a word, carried me off to Lady Clackmannan’s *clique*, and devoted her whole evening to me. This

gave me an opportunity of noticing how much her feelings prevail over what she *calls* her “principles,” in the affair between Clarence and Alicia. She adores her son, and doats upon her niece; and, though fully aware that the match would be most imprudent, and intending to discourage it, unconsciously lends the young people all the assistance in her power. She cannot bear to see her boy looking uneasy, and whispers, “She is gone into the tea-room.” By and by, fearing that Lady Alicia may forget her engagements to dance with her cousin, she exclaims, “Remember this is the fourth *contredanse*—remember you are engaged to Clarence.” I do not wonder Lady Clackmannan is angry with her, but she cannot help it. The warmest feelings are still glowing under the leprous crust of worldliness she has contracted in the contaminating lazard-house of fashion.

A charming day at Hazlebank! I soon discovered why the duke was so difficult in his

invitations, and so early in his hour. The party was made to meet his mother; a very superior woman, who lives in retirement at a fine old family mansion, near Harefield, and is treated by her family with marked respect. The duchess has a most distinguished look. She reminds me of Sir Thomas Lawrence's full-length portrait of Mrs. Siddons. I thought her a little stately, till I was presented to her by her son, when I found her high-breeding tempered by the mildest courtesy. With such a mother, I no longer wonder that the Duke of Merioneth has shewn himself difficult in the choice of a wife.

Not having been at Hazlebank before, I was much interested by the collection of modern pictures and sculptures; still more so, by its conservatories, containing the first collection of exotics in the kingdom. The duke, aware that my *engouement* on this point equals his own, was good-natured enough to be my cicerone, and explain all that was worth notice.

Our party collected in the orangery, where he was pointing out a new system of grafting practised in Italy, when he suddenly appealed to Lord Hartston, who was standing near us, for confirmation of some startling facts, compelling him to be a third person in our conversation ; which lasted so long, by the way, that the saturnine philosopher and myself can no longer avoid being on speaking terms. We had an elegant *déjeuner* without effort or pretensions ; and afterwards, as the evening was warm, came out under the cedar-trees to take ices and coffee. It was all very pleasant,—the party well assorted,—the *locale* enchanting. I was quite sorry when dusk came on, and the carriages were ordered to return to town. How dusty, noisy, and vulgar the streets of London appeared, after fresh, dewy, delightful Hazlebank ! I met Mrs. Percy, afterwards, at Mrs. Harrington's ball ; who, when she heard that we had had neither music, dancing, tumbling, nor syllabubs, at the duke's, exclaimed—

“*Je vous fais mon compliment* of your breakfast. I am really grateful to the duke for not involving me in so humdrum an affair.”

— I am ashamed to admit how much I feel annoyed by this business with Lord Penrhyn. I never wished him to propose to me, or to have the renown of having refused him ; but quite as little did I wish him to assume the tone of having refused *me*. His deportment at Almack’s will, at all events, lead people to suppose that he resents the rumour of our marriage as arising from myself. Altogether, I am out of spirits. On Monday my sister leaves town for Bedfordshire, and, though I have been unable to persist in my intention of declining my projected visit, I cannot bear the thoughts of parting with her, now I have ascertained from personal observation how uneasy is the life she leads with Herbert. In spite of his talents and good qualities, her attachment *must* eventually give way under the influence of his detestable temper.

Saturday. How strange!—I had agreed to dine quietly at the Herberts to-day, and, giving up the opera, to pass the evening with Armine. Their hour is seven, and I was punctual; but my brother-in-law was still out. Half-past seven, —eight,—half-past eight,—no Herbert! Armine grew horribly uneasy, for Henry is punctual to a fault, and to a still greater fault exactive of punctuality in others. The butler came in twenty times to know if dinner was to be served; the children cried at being sent to bed without kissing papa; and at length Armine thought it would be civil to me to propose sitting down to dinner. As I oftener dine at nine this hot weather than any other hour, of course I took pity on my poor sister's fidgetiness, and refused. At last, as the clock of Park Street Chapel struck half-past nine, a knock at the door, and in came Mr. Herbert; looking as cross as if he had lost half his fortune by a fall of the stocks.

“ We fancied you had changed your mind,

and were gone to dine at the club ; but Harriet would not hear of sitting down without you," said my sister, in a deprecating tone.

" She is very obliging. You had much better have dined. The dinner must be spoiled. I could have had a mutton-chop at a minute's notice."

" Oh, no ! much better sit down all comfortably together. Dinner will be on the table in a moment. Have you washed your hands ?"

" Did you not hear me come straight into this room as I entered the house ?"

" Is any thing the matter ?" interposed I, stoutly ; " has any thing occurred to annoy you ?"

" Nothing ! I was detained by business."

" Not disagreeable, I hope ?"

" When was business ever agreeable ?" he replied, stalking out the room.

Dinner was now announced ; and, by the time the soup was cold, Herbert made his re-

appearance from his dressing-room ; refreshed by cold water, but still cross. Only monosyllables were to be abstracted from him ; and, by the time he had helped us, in the second course, to a green goose—done, not brown, but black — he relapsed into total silence. Armine and I, who had been talking together for three hours, had exhausted our gossip. We formed a charming family party. At last, when dessert was on the table, the servants withdrawn, and himself thrown back into his cogitation chair, he suddenly burst forth into, “A d—d, ugly, gormandizing egotist ! to risk *his* life against such a thing as that !” and swallowed a glass of claret, as if to quench the burning particles of his indignation ; while Armine coloured crimson at the indecorum of his ejaculation.

“ You are not aware that you are taking us into your confidence,” said I, trying to turn the matter into jest. “ An ugly gormandizing egotist — must designate Mr. Hanton. *Whose*

life you consider too precious to be risked against *his*, we are yet to learn."

" You have a wide scope for guessing. Scarcely a man about town but is worth the weight of ten such superficial asses as George Hanton."

" You seem to be in the mood for calling names."

" I am suffering under great irritation. Hartston has been on the point of fighting George Hanton, and without doing me the honour of calling on me for advice ; I, who have been his most intimate friend these ten years past."

" A married man is not lightly to be involved in such affairs," said I : " he shewed his good taste. And how has the business ended ?"

" Colonel Trevor acted as his second ; and it was the opinion of the club this morning, from something that fell from Trevor's brother, that a meeting *must* take place. No one knows

the motive of the quarrel ; they say some impertinent observation fell from Hanton, as they were riding together in the park, which Hartston required him to retract. Whatever it was, after much correspondence between the seconds, Hanton has fully retracted ; but you may suppose that I could not return home till my doubts were set at rest. I am out of all patience with Hartston. What business had he to bring himself into contact with such a thing as Hanton ?”

“ I am sure I am thankful to him for not involving you in the affair,” faltered Armine, with tears in her eyes. “ I had not thought it possible that my regard for him could have been heightened.”

“ How can two men, of pursuits and character so different, have possibly managed to quarrel ?” said I, unwilling to admit all the interest I felt in the subject.

“ Pursuit ! what pursuits *has* George Hanton but those of stuffing and gambling ? To see

such an animal affect the epicure!—scarcely finding an ortolan or a partridge delicate enough for the nutriment of a body which a hungry wolf would not deign to feed upon!"

In short, Herbert could scarcely find words to express his indignation ; and, partly to get rid of his violence, partly in hopes to gratify my curiosity touching the cause of a duel which cannot fail to be much talked of, I altered my determination about the opera, sent for the carriage, and departed. But, on ariving at my box, I found myself *de trop*. I forgot having announced to Cecilia my determination not to go ; and she had taken with her Madame di Campo Fiorito, who does not "take with her," but is invariably "followed by" a sort of triple shadow, a cerberus of certain three dandies, who, with the two ladies, completely filled our cozy little box. Of course, I would not hear of disturbing them ;—assured Lady Cecilia I had twenty seats at my disposal, and withdrew in all possible haste,—secretly determined to

go home. As I stood waiting for my carriage, however, the Duke of Merioneth came in from some royal dinner-party, and stopped to say *bon soir, en passant*. On learning my dilemma, he would not admit of my losing the last act of the new ballet, but insisted on my accompanying him to his box, which is nearly the best in the house; when I enjoyed, more than I had ever done before, the dancing of the Taglioni. I could not resist my inclination to question him about the duel, of which he had not heard a syllable; and seemed to feel the matter as warmly as Herbert. He promised me to go to the Travellers' after the opera, and call on me to-morrow. I am afraid he will not get here before three o'clock. What could Lord Hartston and George Hanton find to fight about?

— I, who am never visible to visitors on Sunday mornings, desired to-day that every one might be admitted, in order to avoid the *gaucherie* of giving an exclusive order for the

duke. The consequence is, that, from two o'clock till six, my rooms have been filled with all the bores in town, while his Grace has not made his appearance! Perhaps the appointment was mere *façon de parler*, and he never meant to come.

Had I not been pre-engrossed by the subject of the duel, I should have been at once shocked and amused by a scene which occurred here an hour ago. Lord Hilton and Lady Buntingford were sitting with me, arranging the *à quand* of a little ball he wants to give on board his yacht at Woolwich, of which he has asked me to do the honours; when in walked Count Szchazoklwonski, whom, though always wild and reckless, I never yet saw in such a state of perturbation.

“A thousand excuses, dear Madame Delafals,” said he, “but (*sans vous interrompre*) what was it the family lives next house to you; and what name was it, the confounded

rascals which was paying him a visit just now?"

"A showy-looking foreigner in a showy-looking cabriolet?" said I, readily comprehending that he alluded to the daily suitor of Miss Augusta Gresham Ronsham.

"A beast-looking foreigner, in a beast-looking cab," cried the count, with indignation.

"I beseech you what calls he himself?"

"I am sorry I cannot inform you," said I; "I am equally unacquainted with my neighbours and their guests."

"If you mean a tall handsome Transylvanian, who goes about with the Gresham Ronshams," observed Lady Buntingford, "his name is something like Schwartzkywhich. They asked leave to bring him to my ball, but my list was full, and I declined."

"Do you not mean Count Schwarzkiewicz?" inquired Lord Hilton. "He is a friend of Lancaster's, and Sir Jervis Hall's; and they are trying to get him in at the

Travellers'. A deuced knowing fellow about horses. They tell me he has a breeding stud in the Ukraine, which furnishes half the Austrian cavalry."

"A pitiful rascals, — a disgusting impostors!" cried Szchazoklwonski, in a still greater fury. "Unless my eyes strangeways deceive me, 'tis a runaway hayduck of my father's, which was severely flogged for stealing; and which would have been sent to the ranks to mend his moral, had he not took French furlough, and made off from Hungarn."

"You must be mistaken, my dear fellow! — you must be mistaken!" exclaimed Lord Hilton. "Schwarzkiewicz brought excellent letters here from Paris, — he is very well in society. I don't know him personally, but I have heard him highly spoken of by all our fellows."

"No such tings!" exclaimed Szchazoklwonoki, out of all patience; " 'tis a *kerl*, a vagabonds, — vat you calls a blackguards!"

“ Be cautious, be cautious!” cried Hilton; “ make sure of your man before you persist in the charge. *Where* did you see him? *when*?”

“ I caught a glance as he step from his cab into the house who is next from this.”

“ Mr. Gresham Ronsham’s, of Wrangham Hall—a highly respectable family,” interposed Lady Buntingford.

“ May be or not,” cried the count. Mr. Creeshing Ronshing has a swindlers in his apartments at tis fery minutes!”

“ Could not your friend make sure of the fact,” observed the more prudent Lady Buntingford, “ by remaining here till the count’s departure, and watching him into the carriage?”

“ Certainly, if you think it worth while,” said I, addressing the count.

“ It is more than worth while; it is a duty to relieve society of an impostor,” observed Lord Hilton. “ Since the question has

been raised, and since I know Schwarzkiewicz to be on the eve of admission into the Travellers', *I*, for my own satisfaction, entreat you not to leave the business in doubt."

" My book-room commands a view of Mr. Gresham Ronsham's door," said I; " if you like to take up your station there, you cannot fail to see the exit of the count."

" No, no; I would incost him face to face, for more demonstrations!" cried the angry count. " I shall walk up and downs the Place till he shall pass."

" Give me leave to accompany you," said Lord Hilton. " I shall not be sorry to witness the scene, and you may require testimony of what passes. *Allons!*"

" You will not have long to wait," I observed, as they took leave. " My neighbours are always early at the Zoological on Sundays, — always first and last at every public place. It is already four. They will soon be on the wing."

“ Pray, let me remain with you till the scene is over,” said Lady Buntingford: “ I am dying to know how it ends. I have always told that foolish woman, my friend Mrs. Ronsham, that, for the mother of a family, she is much too general in her acquaintance. I have no doubt this count will turn out a swindler; and then the prospects of that unfortunate girl, Augusta, are ruined for life. Do let us come into your book-room.”

The moment we entered the door, loud angry voices, under the window, convinced us the *scene* was already in progress; and, looking out, we perceived Count Szchazoklwonoki collaring the infuriated Schwarzkiewicz; while Lord Hilton kept back the interference of the footmen of Mr. Gresham Ronsham, whose whole establishment, “ foolish fat scullion and all,” was assembled on the door-steps. At last, I was vexed to see my friend, Szchazoklwonoki, inflict several blows

with his cane on the shoulders of his antagonist; readily anticipating what followed, that the interference of the police would be called in by some officious bystander.

“They be only foreigneers,” said a man in a light porter’s jacket. “Dang un, let’un foight it out.”

The police thought otherwise. Both were taken into custody; when Szchazoklwonoki, addressing the German groom in waiting with his tilbury, bade him drive off to the Austrian Embassy, and bring his two friends, Count Dietrichstein and Prince Lichtenstein, to meet him at the office. The moment this order was given, to the surprise of all present, the *soi-disant* Count Schwarzkiewicz, who had hitherto been as magnanimous as *le brave Dunois*, fe whimpering on his knees upon the pavement, imploring the count to let him off: but Szchazoklwonoki was inflexible; gave him anew in charge as a swindler, and proceeded

to meet him in Marlborough Street. St. James's Place is, luckily, so quiet a situation, that but a moderate mob was collected to witness this strange affair; or to hear the shriek (piercing as that of Parisina) with which, from her bower-window, Miss Augusta Gresham Ronsham witnessed the recreancy of the delinquent.

So soon as the street was cleared, Lady Buntingford proceeded, at my suggestion, to enlighten the mind of “that foolish woman, her friend, Mrs. Ronsham,” touching the mysteries of the day. I suspect she succeeded in persuading the family that it would be better to put an unconscious face upon the business; for, in the course of an hour, the family coach came round, and away they rumbled *à l'ordinaire* into the Park; the carriage displaying only four pink satin bonnets, instead of five. Miss Augusta remained at home, weeping out her tender sorrows.

About six o'clock, I received a few apologizing lines from the duke, stating that he had been unavoidably detained by the arrival of his mother, to pass the day with him ; and informing me, that nothing was known of the quarrel between his friend and Mr. Hanton, further than that the affair was at an end.

—At seven, the Herberts dined with me ; my brother in high spirits at the prospect of quitting town, and Armine quietly happy, because she saw her husband so. Immediately after dinner, I proposed a drive in the open carriage on the Harrow road,—the prettiest, but least frequented of the suburbs ; and, while enjoying the cool of the evening, and gossiping of this and that, Lord Hartston and his duel again came upon the *tapis*. In the openness of my heart, I indiscreetly observed, that I believed Hanton capable of any degree of insolence — that his conduct towards myself — I paused, but it was too late. Herbert would

not let me rest, till I had explained every particular of the proposal and the letter.

“ By heavens ! I clearly understand it now ! ” cried he. “ The infernal ass, no doubt, hazarded to Hartston some impertinent comment upon your conduct ; and Hartston, impelled by the foolish preference he is still absurd enough to indulge, and, knowing you had neither husband, father, nor brother, to defend you, thought fit to resent it ! As if the duty did not belong to *me* ! As if it were not *my* place to vindicate the reputation of my sister-in-law ! I must have a serious explanation with him ; I *must* know the truth.”

“ But you have not the slightest grounds for your supposition,” said I, really alarmed.

“ There are a thousand, a million of topics, on which they may have disagreed.”

“ No, no, no ! From one or two hints I gathered from Colonel Trevor, who was eager to put an end to my investigation, I

am convinced that *you*, and *you only*, were the cause of the dispute."

"At all events," interposed Armine, "the affair is now at rest; and it would be very unfair to my sister to renew the publicity of what *must* be painful, and *may* be injurious to her."

"Injurious to her!" cried Herbert, losing all command of himself; "I declare to you, Harriet, that for a woman endowed with common sense, I look upon you as worse than inexcusable. Through life your prospects have been ruined by your own wilfulness,—your own folly! It is now more than ten years since I first became acquainted with you; and, from that time, I have scarcely ever seen you conduct yourself like a reasonable being."

"Thank you," said I, trying, at least, to retain the command of my own temper.

"No; don't think to silence me by a woman's flippant retort! I *will* tell you the truth,

and you *shall* hear it. Think of all the evil you have heaped on your own head ! Because that fellow, Delaval, swore you were an angel at your first race-ball, and looked well at the head of his regiment on a field-day, you accepted his proposals. You were assured by your friends, that he was a violent man — a man of inferior education ; yet you ventured to give him your hand, and fix yourself for life in one of the most wretched districts in Ireland. Reflect on what he became there ! Reflect on what you suffered under the tyranny of a brute — a sot !”

“ Stay !” cried I. “ With myself you are at liberty to deal as harshly as you please. Colonel Delaval is no more. *His* name is sacred.”

“ So far you may be right,” replied Herbert, in a milder tone. “ Of *him* I have no right to speak ; but of yourself, Harriet, I must and will. You returned among us, having

suffered much, and little profited by your sufferings; but young, honoured, wealthy, rich in all that *ought* to have secured your happiness. What have you done to improve these blessings? Branded yourself with fashionable notoriety, and rendered your name as familiar in the mouths of the puppies of the clubs, as those of the vile and worthless. One of the first men in this kingdom was disposed to make you his wife, and elevate you to a position which even the most ambitious of your vain associates have gloried in attaining. Your levity revolted him. It was a woman of heart, of mind, not a flimsy worldling, he wished to find in the companion of his future life; and all he has derived from a momentary illusion, is the stigma of a duel with one of the meanest and most contemptible of Crockford's profligates. But this is not all. You have exposed yourself to a thousand slights. Penrhyn's insolence (thanks to your friends, the Lancasters and Percies)

has raised a general laugh at your expense; yet, apparently unsatisfied with the extent of your incautious, only last night you chose to thrust yourself upon the notice of the public, *tête-à-tête* with the Duke of Merioneth, in order that the Sunday prints might hold you up to ridicule as they have done this day, as “the dashing Irish widow, who is venturing a bold cast of the net for — ;” but why should I repeat such trash! or, rather, why should such inuendoes have been levelled at the daughter of General Montresor!”

I was too much agitated for any attempt to interrupt or appease him. While he was speaking, dearest Armine, unable to repress her tears, took my hand in hers, and pressed it tenderly, as if bespeaking my forbearance towards her husband. But her appeal was needless. I could not be angry with Herbert. Every word he uttered was dictated by the best intentions, — by the warmest interest in my welfare. I

trust he exaggerates my errors. I trust he is deceived. 1 —

* * * *

Monday, 1st. — I woke this morning with a dreadful headach; partly caused by reflections on Herbert's remonstrances; partly by the knowledge that Armine and the children were already some twenty miles on their road into Bedfordshire. However, I *have* promised to visit them at Hollybridge early in the autumn.

Monday, 8th. — A whole week elapsed, and not a word in my diary. Since Herbert's rough apostrophe, or, perhaps I should say, since Herbert's harsh administration of wholesome truths, I have dreaded to record my own observations, seeing how completely I have suffered myself to become a dupe to the flat-

terers of the world. I misdoubt myself,—I misdoubt others. I would have quitted town the very day of Armine's departure, but that such a precipitate retreat would have been instantly traced by the malicious to its true motive, mortification. I am grown listless,—morose. People ask if I am ill; and suggest this remedy and that; as they do to languid fine ladies, sickening under the fatigues of the season, and the vexation of its termination.

Most families, unshackled by the claims of parliament, or the responsibilities of supreme fashion, have already quitted town. London is more close, more dusty, more disagreeable than I could have supposed possible. The once green park under my windows is now of a tawny yellow; and water-carts and Grange's currant-ice alone preserve the men and beasts, who still frequent it, from being carbonized in the course of their morning's amusements. Is it not one of the strangest abuses of this fox-

hunting kingdom, that winter is to be spent in the country, and summer in town? What a meritorious achievement would it be for the reign of Victoria I. to cause the extermination of foxes, like that of the wolves of yore, by exacting an annual tribute of so many thousand heads! thus enabling the legislative lords of the creation to assemble between November and May; and its ladies to enjoy their parks and flower-gardens, when the rose is on the bush, and the daisy in the grass.

As it is, we denizens of the scorching metropolis seem to pass the dog-days in rushing forth to this suburb and to that, gasping after fresh air. To-day, a *déjeuner* at Highgate; to-morrow, a gipsy party to Finchley; with fish dinners in taverns, savouring of punch, tobacco, Thames mud, and fried flounders; or venison dinners at the Star and Garter, for the supplementary enjoyment of a dusty drive. Old Lady Burlington and Mrs. Crowhurst, the Lan-

casters and Percies, exclaim, every time I meet them, “ Is not London charming, now all the people are gone ? It is like *écarté* after long whist ! ” For my part, I find it resemble only the last tedious dragging repetition of a waltz played by a musical snuff-box, of which the main spring is run down. The thing wants winding up.

The other day we were a little enlivened by the novelty of Lord Hilton’s ball. Those especially invited, myself among the number, left Westminster Bridge about four o’clock in the Admiralty barge ; with a brass-band attending, to outbray the strange tumults of the river ; and with little Count Alfred de la Vauguyon (a walking Delacroix’s shop) to out-essence its *mauvaises odeurs*. The river looked of a dingy copper colour ; and the steeples of the city, and engine chimneys of the borough—nay, even the masts of the shipping in the docks, seemed to lose themselves in the haze of an atmosphere worthy

the coast of Guinea, or the canvass of some Martinian pandemonium. We arrived at the inn at Woolwich, where five-and-twenty were invited to dine, in a state worthy to have been garnished with fried parsley and served among the *fritures*. White-bait ought not to tempt any thing less than an alderman into such superfluous exertions in such weather.

The ball was prettily managed, and the yacht beautifully illuminated; but it strikes me we should have danced quite as much to our own satisfaction in Lord Hilton's mansion in Berkley Square. I accompanied Lady Cecilia back. I am careful *now* to avoid being in my own carriage with a vacant seat to be encroached upon by some impertinent lounger. The most amusing person of the party was Madame di Campo Fiorito. Deeply penetrated with the notion of the nautical glories of England, and the “rule” which that tin-helmeted Amazon Britannia assumes to herself

over the waves, she seemed to fancy that our marine supremacy must commence at London Bridge ; she saw a seventy-four in every West-Indiaman,—a frigate in every Doggerbank cod-schuyt,—and a tar under the jacket of every jolly young waterman. Her ejaculations at the sight of Greenwich Hospital, and its wooden-legged Tom Toughs, were quite *Della-Cruscan* ; and greatly did she applaud the magnanimity of our English sovereigns in having, as she concluded, resigned their own palace as a shelter for the veterans of their fleets, and contented themselves with the tumble-down alms-house of St. James's. The yacht, too, enchanted her ; and she enchanted us in her turn by the description of a *féte* she had witnessed in childhood, given to Josephine in the Bay of Genoa, by the Ligurian republic ; when hundreds of orange-trees in blossom were embarked in boats, and towed around the barge containing the wife of the hero of Marengo ;

an idea far more elegant, in my opinion, than the tinsel glories of Cleopatra's galley, with its purple brocades and painted Cupids.

Lady Southam, who leaves town to-morrow, is anxious that I should accompany her to Southam Castle ; and there are few women for the sake of whose society I would more willingly make a sacrifice. But I have promised Lady Cecilia to remain here till something definitive is settled about poor Clarence. How is it I have managed to see so little of Isabella Southam during her stay in town ? With the exception of a dinner here, and one at her own house, we have scarcely met. Such is the *entraînement* of fashion in London society, that persons entertaining a sincere friendship for each other, and living only at a few streets' distance, if engaged in different sets, content the claims of their mutual regard by now and then a formal dinner party, at which they are unable to exchange six words of conversation.

Isabella belongs to a sober caste, and seems bigoted to the rationalities of the present court; —is constant to the Ancient Music,—curious about exhibitions and picture auctions,—takes her children half-a-dozen times in the season to the British Museum and Longman's catacombs of learning; and eschews a circulating library as she would a masquerade warehouse. Wise in her generation, she will meet her reward; but, foolish as I am in mine, she will not meet me. I wish I had courage to disentangle myself from the webs of filmy gossamer, which I have suffered to fold and enfold me, till they have become potent as chains of mail. But it is too late.

I have not once seen the Duke of Merioneth since the newspapers thought proper to couple his name with mine. He called here the other day; but at the hour when I was certain to be out: for I continue my daily rides with Lady Alicia and her father,—often ex-

tending them as far as Roehampton, or Richmond. The King and Queen go to Windsor next week, and I shall consequently lose the Clackmannans. Previously to the Penrhyn affair, I had become very intimate with the Rossanas, whom I particularly like: but, not choosing to put myself in the way of *his* solemn salutations, I have gradually receded from their set. It amuses me, now the gaieties of the season have subsided, to observe divers persons and coteries re-ascending into importance, who, during the crush of June, were forgotten. Lady Kent's card-parties are once more frequented; and Lady William Bately's, once more *recherchés*. The placard of "to let furnished," is posted anew in the dusty windows of the family mansion, erewhile the scene of poor Augusta Gresham Ronsham's sentimentalities; and I noticed, that it required a supplementary baggage-waggon, inscribed with the name of "Tanaquil Gresham Ronsham, Esq. Wrang-

ham Park, Hunts," to convey into the country the additional trunks, boxes, and cases containing the paraphernalia of their disastrous London campaign. The *exeunt omnes* of the family wore a most dispiriting aspect. The elder girls, like the coach-horses, looked worn to their last legs ; the younger ones had been backboarded, metronomed, and mazurk'd into a most cadaverous complexion ; and the meagre baby, with its pinched blue nose, seemed victimized by a course of calomel and a daily apothecary. Lady Buntingford informs me she suggested a couple of months at Leamington for the general restoration of the family ; but that papa, after due discharge of his bills of the season, was beginning to talk of the hardness of the times, and the reduction of his rent-roll ; while mamma was of opinion, that the less they appeared in public the better, till Stanislas Ruprecht Schmidt (*alias* Count Schwarzkiewicz) should be duly released from the

tread-mill, and on board the Hamburg steamer.

Yes! I shall soon be at liberty. The Clarence crisis is approaching. I have just received a P.P.C. from the Mardynvilles,—an unfailing signal that the Court, and consequently the Clackmannans, are on the move for Windsor.

En attendant, one of the French princes has arrived; and as so few persons remain in town who are in a position to entertain him, the Duke of Merioneth has determined to give a farewell ball to-morrow, in honour of his royal highness; the last fête of the season, but probably one of the most brilliant!

The *last*! Weary as I am of this eternal circle of frivolity,—this day without a night,—this year without a winter,—the idea that I am about to say farewell to so many intimate associates,—to part, for a period of eight months, and perhaps for ever, from so many who have

been kind to me, fills my mind with melancholy forebodings. Independence, too, is a fine thing; but the bird that soars highest, and sings loudest in honour of the joys of liberty, still keeps in view the little nest to which, when weary of the wing, it can return for shelter; while I, who have “the world before me, where to choose my place of rest,” tremble at the wideness of my prospects, and the knowledge of my own irresponsibility. I may travel where I will,—abroad,—at home; seek what company I list, good, bad, or indifferent; and no one has a right to call in question my comings, or my goings. No one cares whether I injure my reputation,—whether I squander my fortune. Armine is wrapt up in her husband and children; Herbert in himself. Even the reprimand he lately addressed me arose from the danger in which he supposed me to have involved his friend, more than from interest in my own welfare. Were I to set forth, on a

tour to the Continent, and indulge my own vagrant devices, until next spring, I verily believe that not a creature would inquire, “What has become of Mrs. Delaval?” unless, perhaps, Lady Cecilia, during the intervals of her heartquakes about her son!—Dispiriting reflexion!—*Rude école!*

—I know not whether my misanthropic doom of yesterday had written strange defeatures in my face; but, when I entered the ball-room at Merioneth House last night, several persons accosted me with the inquiry, “Prythee, why so pale?” which is sure to answer itself, by bringing blushes to the cheek. *Certes*, it was no time or place for *tristesse*. Beautiful as the fêtes there always are, *this* was surpassing. The *encoignures* of the room were filled with pyramidal *jardinières* reaching to the ceiling, and containing nothing but roses. Every nursery-ground near London must have been despoiled; for there were many hundred varie-

ties; some of the choicest kind. It was literally “the feast of roses;” and Moore, who was present, must have felt himself in an eighth heaven of his own creation!

In honour of the young prince (of whose grand-uncle, the Emperor Leopold, she was formerly the intimate friend), the Duchess of Merioneth for once presided over a *fête* given by her son; and queenly, indeed, she looked. It struck me, that *her* deportment, as a noble matron, and that of the *Duc de N.*, as a *prince du sang*, were alike the perfection of high breeding. They talked for some time together; and, formal as such *entretiens* needs must be, there was none of the restraint between them which would have led some vulgar dowager to observe, “What could I find to say to a boy?” or some gawky lordling to complain, “What the d—l could I talk of to an old woman?”

I was rather curious, and perhaps a little

anxious, to ascertain whether the reports in circulation would produce any change in his Grace's manners towards myself. But my inquietudes were quite superfluous. I might have known, that there was nothing of the Penrhyn,—nothing of the Hanton, in *his* kind and noble nature. He received me more warmly than he had ever done before. The duchess found a place for me to sit near her ; and at supper, I was the only untitled person to whom a place was assigned at the table prepared for the Duc de Nemours. Lord Lancaster mentioned accidentally, when I met him the previous day at the British Gallery, that George Hanton was furious at not being invited ; and I am convinced, from an observation made to me by the duke, that the omission was intentional, and a compliment to me. I certainly *do* feel happier in houses where I am secure from the spectacle of his self-complacent ugliness.

In the midst of the ball, Mrs. Percy, perceiving me to be in fashion, took my arm, and coaxed me away into one of the half-empty drawing-rooms, much to my discomposure ; for *there* sat Lady Clackmannan in violent disputation with Clarence, and I would not for the world have appeared to take note of what was going on between them.

“ I congratulate you, my dear creature,” whispered Mrs. Percy, after having planted me on one of the ottomans, and herself by my side ; “ he is gone,—actually gone ! ”

I turned towards her with wondering eyes ; “ To whom do you allude ? ” being plainly inscribed in the expression of my face.

“ Penrhyn,—Lord Penrhyn, ” she replied, carefully examining what effect the mention of that cabalistic name might produce in my countenance. “ Refused in form by the Rossanás, and so much to his astonishment, that he quitted town within four-and-twenty hours,

after writing to put off all the people he had invited for August to Penrhyn Hall for grouse-shooting. The *Courier* of this evening states, that he has ordered his yacht to prepare for a cruise in the Mediterranean."

"I trust Lord Penrhyn will amuse himself," said I. "He has long ceased to amuse me."

"Oh! as to you," cried Mrs. Percy, "his conduct was absolutely unpardonable. - I told every one, at the time, that I considered it infamous. However, there were people about him—George Hanton and the Lancasters—who thought it clever to put him up to a tone likely to pique you."

"They must have been grievously disappointed to find me so indifferent on the subject."

"Of course we were all aware you must be annoyed; but we did honour to your self-command in seeming to take it so coolly."

“ More honour than I deserved. I may have been unconscious of insults deliberately prepared by others, and, therefore, to *them* most evident.”

“ Why, really, my dear soul,” she was continuing, but at that moment the duke, evidently in search of me, approached, to mention his mother’s request that I would join her supper-table with the royal party ; and, accepting his offered arm, I was not sorry to leave Mrs. Percy to her malicious manœuvres. After supper, the duke, for the first and only time during the evening, joined the dancers, inviting me to be his partner in a waltz ; on the conclusion of which, leading me to one of the *jardinières*, he plucked an exquisite white and yellow union rose, the object of general admiration throughout the evening, and presented it to me. I saw many envious eyes fixed upon me, and, after the mortifications I have recently experienced, could not help feeling a flush of

feminine triumph at being thus singled out by a person singled out by the whole of London. Lord Hartston had just entered the room as I received my beautiful bouquet, and I determined to retire with my laurels and my rose unwithered. Having already asked for my carriage, I withdrew as precipitately as Cinderella.

—This morning, I was sent for at an early hour, to Lady Cecilia, whom I found half in hysterics, wholly in despair. Lady Clackmannan's explanations last night with Clarence seem to have been decisive. She has forbidden all further intercourse between the cousins ; and, instead of following the court to Windsor, leaves the marquess to his official duties, and actually sets off with Alicia this very day for Scotland. Clarence fancies himself ill-used ; although Lady C. has acted only as any other parent would have done in her situation ; yet I had some difficulty in preventing Cecilia

from writing to her sister one of those angry letters which create an irreparable breach. Women in a passion should begin by throwing into the fire their pens and paper: as much mischief has been done in the world by hasty letters, as by the discovery of gunpowder.

Made my *adieu* to-night to the opera;—a melancholy spectacle. The house almost empty,—half the boxes not wholly deserted, being filled with problematics. It really oppressed me to note the loss of so many of the charming faces on which I have been gazing for the last four months, till they seemed inseparable from the place; nor had I patience to look down on the empty benches of the pit, and deserted fops-alley, where only three weeks ago every face was *de connaissance*. With the exception of some thirty men who, I fancy, never quit London, the desecrated space was filled by haberdashers' apprentices and butlers out of place! I have just answered a pressing letter

of invitation which I received yesterday from Armine, promising to be at Hollybridge next week. *Après*—I trust the stars have me in their keeping; for projects I have none,—*alors, comme alors!*

—To increase my depression at the moment of parting with so many friends, I have accidentally been witness to a most painful, or, perhaps, I ought to say, a most impressive scene. On visiting my *couturiere*, to execute a commission for one of my Irish friends, I found the good woman's aspect so doleful that I could not help making inquiries. Her venerable inmate, she said, was upon his death-bed!

“Mr. Forster rallied for a time, poor gentleman, under the excitement produced by your generous offices,” continued Mrs. Hemstitch; “and we were in hopes of getting him into the country: but the very heart within him seems to have been worn away by years of trouble; the vital powers were gone,

and, for the last three days, he has been rapidly sinking. He knows that his time is come,—is resigned and tranquil ; for your generosity, madam, has secured the welfare of his children. I cannot express the difference in his feelings now and a month ago. Then, it was dreadful to see him shrink from the approach of death ; now, his frame of mind is as it should be. Of one thing he has long been earnestly desirous, poor soul ;—he wants to thank and bless his benefactress. But we have put him off with pretexts of your being absent from town ; for, of course, madam, I felt the impossibility of asking a great lady and a gay lady like yourself to visit a dying man in the attic of one of your tradespeople."

" If you think my presence would afford him the smallest satisfaction," said I, " even now, at the eleventh hour, I will gladly accede to his wish." And I own I was in hopes of hearing my offer declined, for I did not feel

myself to be in a state of preparation for such a scene.

“ If you would so far condescend,” said Mrs. Hemstitch, eagerly ; and, without further deliberation, I removed from my head the gaudy bonnet and plumes so unsuitable to the nature of my visit, and followed my blunt but good Samaritan up a dark staircase to a door, at which she tapped gently ; and, after a little whispering with the nurse, beckoned me in. The deathlike stillness of that little chamber scarcely induced the belief that four persons were its inmates ; but the son and daughter were kneeling on either side the bed—their very tears falling silently, lest they should disturb the last moments of the dying man.

As I looked upon the white head scarcely distinguishable from the pillow on which it lay, and remembered that it was blanched less by years than by affliction (the humiliating affliction of poverty, which might have been so

readily relieved), my heart grew faint with a sudden consciousness of the responsibilities of the wealthy. The old man's eyes were dim, but his lips moved as though absorbed in inward prayer. Feeling that it was now too late to afford him pleasure by my visit, I was about to withdraw from the room; when the movement attracted his attention, and, turning his languid eyes towards me, he seemed in a moment to understand the motive of my presence. His countenance brightened. Feebly raising his thin hand from the coverlid, he extended it towards me; and, having pressed mine with a grasp of fervour, and an earnest expression of face which I shall not easily forget, placed it in benediction on the head of his girl, whose sobs were stifled in the bedclothes, and extended the other intercedingly to Heaven. In another minute the upraised hand fell back relaxed upon the sheet, and the eyes of the grateful father were already fixed in death.—His

labours were over—his privations ended—his days of darkness brightened into eternal light!

There is comfort to me in the thought, that, useless as is my career of life, in this instance I have had the happiness of contributing to the comfort of a suffering fellow-creature. But was the good deed of *my* seeking? Was it not almost forced upon me by the superior virtue of one, so placed in the scale of society that she ought to have received her example of charity from *me*? Alas! my own merit in the affair is insignificant indeed.

—Lady Cecilia is just now in one of her unreasonable fits of nervousness; and poor Sir Jenison has a happy prospect in the month of conjugal felicity they are about to pass at Cowes. She had settled it with herself that I should accompany her, and that we were to have yachting parties, regattas, and I know not what; and cannot pardon me for preferring

Bedfordshire. But I feel the want of quiet, and of my sister's society ; and, even were I not resolved upon visiting the Herberts, Cowes is the last place I should have preferred, as I find Lord Penrhyn is amusing himself in the Isle of Wight, having already plucked off his Rossana willow.

* * * *

Hollybridge, Beds.—What a pleasant sensation, after the tumults and heartburnings of a season in town, to be awakened by the song of birds, from a tranquillizing night's rest ! How beautifully green appears the verdure of the paddock under my windows, and the coppice towards which it slopes, after the dingy Green Park, and the dusty groves of Buckingham Palace ! How fresh, how fragrant the air here, after the stifling atmosphere of London ! I fancied that the recent dispiritment of my mind

arose from regret at the idea of leaving town ; but, no sooner were the chains of habit broken, and I found myself ensconced in my travelling carriage, than I felt relieved from the pressure of a thousand imaginary evils. I am delighted to find myself here.

Armine and the children have recovered their good looks and good spirits, and received me at the gate, all bloom and cheerfulness ; even Herbert seems to be quite a different creature here in his little domain.

The place is a thousand times prettier than I expected ; and, though “a cottage of gentility,” its pride does not even pretend to be humble. There is a pretty green-house attached to the drawing-room ; and the gardens are good and extensive for the size of the domain. The windows command an animated landscape ; the book-room is well furnished ; altogether, there is an air of cheerfulness which fully explains my brother’s distaste for the

smoky house in New Norfolk Street. Hollybridge is a home that seems to invite one to be happy.

It appears an established rule in country neighbourhoods, that the moment a friend or relative arrives on a visit, all the surrounding families shall confederate to interrupt their enjoyment of each other's society. For three days only was I permitted to be alone with my sister and her rosy children. On the fourth came Lady Farrington, of Farrington Park, full of reproaches to Armine, that she had not more immediately apprised her of dear Mrs. Delaval's arrival; and insisting that an early day should be fixed for a visit to Sir John and herself. Supposing that the word "visit" purported only a formal full-dress dinner party, to be purchased by a drive of five or six miles, I still attempted to telegraph to my sister an entreaty that the project might be negatived. But Lady Farrington was there only to enforce

her demand; and we found it impossible to deny that no pre-engagement prevented our accepting her invitation for Thursday, the second of August. The knotty point thus adjusted, she withdrew; but what was my consternation on learning from Armine that the neighbourhood of Hollybridge is what is called “a charming sociable neighbourhood;” *i. e.* one of those in which it is decreed, that those who dine must sleep, and that those who dine and sleep, extend the penance to eight and forty hours. We have, therefore, impending over us, a visit of two days to fussy, empty, parading Lady Farrington. But this is not my only grievance. She appears to have made a round of visitations for the sole purpose of circulating through the country the arrival of Mrs. Herbert’s sister; the following day, our pretty little drawing-room was crowded with all the visitables within eight miles distance of Hollybridge.

I now admit that I was inhuman in my verdict, that quiet country families, such as the Gresham Ronshams and Farringtons, were better at their country seats than amid the fashionable corruptions of London. I did not know, or had forgotten, the stupifying triviality of a sociable, gossiping country neighbourhood. Amongst the five detachments of fiddle-faddlers who yesterday bestowed their tediousness upon Hollybridge, exactly three topics of conversation were started ; the committal of one Phil. Robinson by a certain worshipful 'Squire Smith, on a charge of having poisoned a fox-cover ;—the probability that Sir Thomas Elliot, the high-sheriff, would start a new carriage for the approaching assizes ;—and the injustice of a bill passed last session, for turning the road between Gorse Hill and Broomby Bottom, so as to secure Lord Forcefig's wall-fruit from the dust. On these three nothingnesses did they ring the changes ; arguing, re-arguing, swal-

lowing their own arguments ; misapprehending, and apologizing for their own stupidity ; misrepresenting, and sneaking out of their own equivocations, till I scarcely wondered that poor Miss Augusta Gresham Ronsham should have been captivated by the fine, gay, bold-faced villany of a Count Schwarzkiewicz, with his man-of-the-world-like diversity of small talk. No pismire, domesticated in its ant-hill, can entertain a narrower view of life and manners than two-thirds of Armine's country neighbours ; valuable people, no doubt, in their generation (*“bien heureux les pauvres d'esprit”*), but tedious beyond all patience, save that of my gentle amiable sister. I have been trying to persuade Armine to remove our work-table and books to-morrow into a delightful grove of lime-trees, a few hundred yards from the house ; but the earnestness with which she pleaded — *“Still we must receive our visitors ; they are kind friendly people ; and, you know,*

it would be impossible to say, ‘not at home,’ to those who come several miles, only to shew us attention,” was unanswerable. It seemed any thing but impossible to *me*; but Armine knows best.

— Farrington Park ! Farrington Park ! — what a type of antediluvianism ! — nothing wanting but the ponderous coach-and-six, with gilt springs, to represent the family establishment of all the Grandisons. A great gloomy state drawing-room, without a flower, a book, or a comfortable chair to muse in ; a great state dining-room, with portraits of all variety of badness, in oils and crayons, of Farringtons of the three last reigns, ending with Sir John, M.P., painted at the expense of the corporation of Bedford, in a William-Pitt-like attitude, with a business-like standish and corporation rolls on his writing-table ; a great state billiard-room, with a table of the last century, its green cloth like my own Green Park, faded into

autumnal yellow ; a great state staircase, and suite of great state bed-rooms, with great state four-post beds, of dusty damask ; and a great state Dutch flower-garden, three quarters of a mile from the hall door ! Every thing, in short, to secure the discomfort of its inmates. Herbert groaned aloud, as we drove up to the portico ; while Armine felt it her duty to console him by the observation, that, however disagreeable the visit, he would be able to get through a great deal of justice-business with Sir John, in the course of the next two days.

Lady Farrington welcomed us with the hospitable fervour of an Arab.

“ I expect a charming party ! ” said she. “ In addition to Sir Thomas Clargess’ family, we have Sir Robert and Lady Mardynville, who are coming from Berkshire to pass a week with us ; very fashionable people, who live on the most intimate terms with the royal family. Perhaps you may have met them in town ? ”

To record the two days of parade and dulness that followed, would be too severe a task. At half past nine, the breakfast-bell, and a morning sacrifice of pasties, hams, tongues, potted meats, with steaming urns and chocolate-pots, in a room hung with scarlet moreen, and facing the morning sun. Next, a stifling *séance* round a work-table, covered with worsteds and carpet-work, till the servant's dinner-bell announces a hot luncheon in the scarlet room, now basking in meridian fervour. Then an airing in the family coach, or a walk in the formal Dutch garden, till the half-hour dressing-bell: a grand toilet of silks and satins,—dinner of four courses,—coffee, tea, whist,—and, at half-past ten, a supper. Four regular meals a-day, eaten with the same dull people, in the same dull room, and unseasoned by a single word of rational conversation! In spite of my presentiments, the Mardynvilles *were* an acquisition to the party; their exceed-

ing absurdity proved a relief, after the commonplace jog-trot decorum of Sir John and his wife. Lady Mardynville insisted on making me the accomplice of her affectation ; and talked of “our friend, the Duke of Merioneth,” and “our balls at St. James’s” (to over-awe the country neighbours), in the style of Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs. But this was not her worst offence. When we made our appearance in the drawing-room, jewelled to the teeth, to weary for the second day’s dinner, Lady M. who had departed after luncheon on a tour of visits, with her hostess, in the family coach, sailed up to me with a patronizing air, to assure me that dear old Lady Hartston was quite irate with the Herberts, for not having apprized her of my presence at Hollybridge.

“ My sister acted in compliance with my request,” was my cold reply ; “ I came to Bedfordshire expressly to visit her, and was

anxious that the time we pass together should be as little as possible broken in upon by strangers.”

“ By strangers,—very possibly ; but, by friends, like Lady Hartston ?”

“ With Lady Hartston I have not even the honour of acquaintance.”

“ Really ? Why, she spoke of you with so much interest, and seemed to know you so intimately, that I concluded you had been friends for years. How strange !”

“ Your mistake does me too much honour. I never spoke to her in my life.”

“ Well, you will speak to her soon. She is going to Hollybridge on Saturday, expressly to wait upon you ; although Lady Farrington informs me that the old lady rarely pays morning visits.”

So, after all, I am condemned to become acquainted with the surly old gentlewoman of the ventilator ; and to-morrow she will be

here ! How snug and comfortable every thing appears in our little greenery, after the glare and gormandizing of Farrington Park ! Of all the taxes whose payment falls to the lot of civilized mortals, what is called our debt to society is certainly one of the heaviest.

Saturday.—Decidedly, that Lady Mardynville is the fairy Guignon in disguise. As if for the express purpose of annoyance, she persuaded Lady Farrington to drive her to Hollybridge to-day ; being well aware that Lady Hartston was to be here. The grave old lady came, evidently disposed to be kind and courteous ; but no sooner did the other two take their places at the luncheon-table, than the Mardynville's abominable fine-ladyism disgusted her into silence. Throughout her flippancies and pretensions, she appealed to her dear Mrs. Delaval for confirmation ; and I had really no patience to find myself elected the

bosom-friend of one, whom I have uniformly avoided as even a visiting acquaintance. What must Lady Hartston think of me, with two such associates as Miss Randall and this lion-and-unicorn hunter? she was very kind, however, in pressing me to visit her; and it is arranged, that on Tuesday we dine and sleep at the Abbey.

Hartston. — I am half inclined to believe that the spirit of local sanctity is never wholly exorcized from the site of a religious house! There is a tone of human tranquillity about this place, which inclines one to expect a procession of monks gliding through its woods, or an encounter with some cowled Benedictine, telling his beads among the ruins of the sanctuary. All is so calm, so still, so holy, that the very belling of the deer under the old oaks becomes a disturbance.

Many people are of opinion that the Sir

Jeffrey Hartston who, in the reign of Elizabeth, erected the present mansion, chose ill in fixing the site so close upon the ruins of the ancient abbey : but the monks seem to have understood the climate of England better than the generality of their successors ; and, in my opinion, the well-screened position of Hartston Abbey, seated on a gentle eminence sloping to a noble stream, is perfection. The park is skirted round by groves ; and the freshness of the home-view delights me more than all the stares over a dozen counties, devised by modern villa-mongers, or puffed by modern auctioneers. A library of old books, a gallery of old pictures, groves of old trees, and a service of old plate, assimilate well with the Elizabethan solidity of the place. I do not wonder that the Mardynville called it dull : her *parvenu* love of glare and tinsel could not recognize the subdued beauties of a spot where Bacon might have mused, or Sidney meditated.

There are two fine pictures here of the present Lord Hartston ; one, painted in early childhood, by Hoppner, in a style that might be mistaken for Reynolds ; the other, at the age of sixteen, by Lawrence. In this last, the youthful countenance gives indication of that striking expression of superiority — that stern, yet not harsh, thoughtfulness, so manifest now in the original. It is a fine and characteristic portrait. I went yesterday, alone, into the breakfast-room where it hangs, and carefully examined it. I was still standing with my eyes riveted upon the face, when the old lady, whom I had supposed to be driving out with the rest of the party, entered unobserved behind me.

“That is the likeness of the best of sons,” said she, startling me by the unexpected sound of her voice. “You, who have only seen him careworn by the duties of office, and sallow with the unwholesome atmosphere and habits

of London, will scarcely recognize poor Eustace in that fine open ingenuous face."

I felt too guilty to reply; and Lady Hartston, apparently roused to family associations by these allusions to the portrait, took me to her private suite of rooms, and pointed out, with pride and delight, the thoughtfulness with which every modern invention, tending to the comfort of age, every piece of furniture suitable to her tastes and convenience, are constantly selected for her use by her son. "Scarcely a week passes," said she, "that Eustace does not send me down some trifle, to mark his unceasing recollection of his mother."

Notwithstanding this increased intimacy between us, my awe of Lady Hartston does not, in the slightest degree, subside. Without the *air de grande dame* of the Duchess of Merioneth, she is twice as imposing. Something in her costume or her countenance always brings Lady Rachel Russell to my mind; she seems

born to be the wife and mother of patriots. Herbert tells me she is the best-informed woman in England ; and Madame de Staël, who ought to be an authority, has assured us that “*tout savoir rend très indulgent :*” yet indulgent she certainly is *not*. *Elle a l'esprit juste*; estimates people and things at their real value, and seems superior to that maudlin affectation of a virtue, which compromises every honest feeling under a pretence of philanthropy. I, therefore, knowing my weakness, shrink under the clear judgment of Lady Hartston.

Walking with her in a beautiful flower-garden, laid out under the southern shelter of the walls of the old Abbey, I ventured on the commonplace remark, that she must be greatly attached to so delightful a place.

“ On the contrary,” she replied, “ I prefer my own small dower-house in Northamptonshire. Hartston is too vast for a person of my years, who is narrowing down her cares

and wishes into a circle, calculated to facilitate the transition into the last and narrowest home. I reside here only till the marriage of my son. Eustace's pursuits and habits prevent his giving his attention to his property; and I should be sorry to see the abode of his ancestors fall into decay. The time, I hope, is not far distant, when my presence will be superfluous; and I shall gladly resign my trust to younger hands."

This, I suppose, is an intimation that Lord Hartston is about to be married; and I find he is expected at the Abbey in ten days' time, for the official recess. *I* shall then have left Bedfordshire. I have promised to join Lady Cecilia, who assures me she is seriously ill, at Cowes next week; and if I can persuade her to accompany me, I will try a total change of scene by a short tour on the Continent,—Switzerland, the Rhine,—no matter where, so that I can hear new voices and see new faces for a time.

—Yes! it is as I anticipated : Lord Hartston is going to be married. After the carriages had been ordered this morning for our departure from the Abbey, Lady Farrington and Lady Mardynville were announced ; and the severity of air, which I find so overpowering in the old lady, grew more grim than ever, as she rose to receive them. Though seated at some distance, I overheard Lady Farrington accounting for the speedy renewal of her visit, by her desire to be among the first with her felicitations.

Lady Hartston's “ I have not the satisfaction of comprehending you,” was freezing. But the flow of Lady Farrington's wishy-washy conversation is not easily suspended; and I soon caught the words, “ satisfactory connexion,” —“ charming young woman,” —“ approaching nuptials,” — and “ domestic felicity.” For some minutes, the name of the intended bride escaped me : but, at length, the exuberant

commendation bestowed by the inveterate twaddler upon the whole family of Rossana, guided my guesses ; and her assertion of Lady Sophia's superiority to her sister decided me, that Lord Penrhyn's cruel charmer was to be the future Lady Hartston. Well, perhaps he could not have chosen better. There cannot be a more sober, regular, or better educated family. His mother said little on the subject ; but we took our leave so immediately afterwards, that I had no opportunity to offer my congratulations.

—Another letter from Cecilia, imploring me to join her immediately : I cannot refuse ; and the Herberts are so persuaded that I shall return to Hollybridge after a few weeks at Cowes, that they have readily sanctioned my immediate departure. I dare not say any thing at present of my continental project. There will be time enough to write, so soon as I shall have arranged my plans with Cecilia. I am

satisfied that Herbert will not approve them ; but when does he approve any decision of mine ? — Happily, he will be too much engrossed by the approaching marriage of his friend, to trouble himself much concerning my proceedings.

Cowes.—Weary of my journey, weary of myself, weary of every thing ! Cecilia's indisposition is evidently the mere result of her anxieties on account of her son ; and I have already been able to give a more satisfactory turn to the views of both. I cannot persuade her of the possibility of leaving England ; but Clarence is to accompany me to the Continent, as soon as she is well enough to part with us. We cannot travel alone ; and I have therefore consented to engage a *dame*, or rather *demoiselle de compagnie*, a certain Miss Vinicombe, who officiated last season as *souffre-douleur* to Lady Evelyn Beresford, and was nearly worn into

a consumption by arrow-root diet, and the wholesome privations of an invalidery; and whom Lady Cis recommends as an intelligent, accomplished woman. In ten days all will be prepared; and “fresh hopes and climates new” will, I trust, restore that elasticity of spirits which the laborious lightness of London dissipation has so strangely subdued. England has served only to depress me;—on the Continent, I look forward to being thoroughly “*désennuyée*.”

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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